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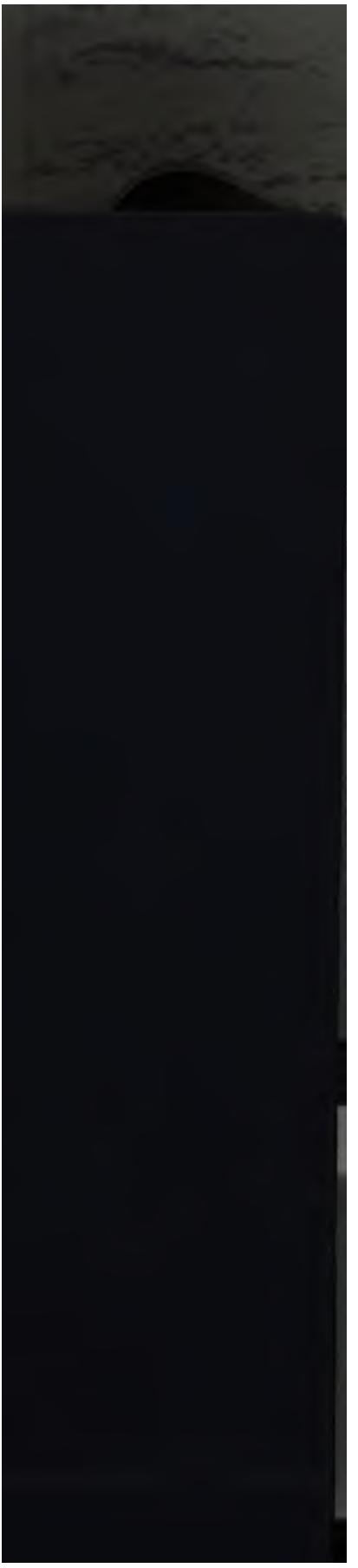

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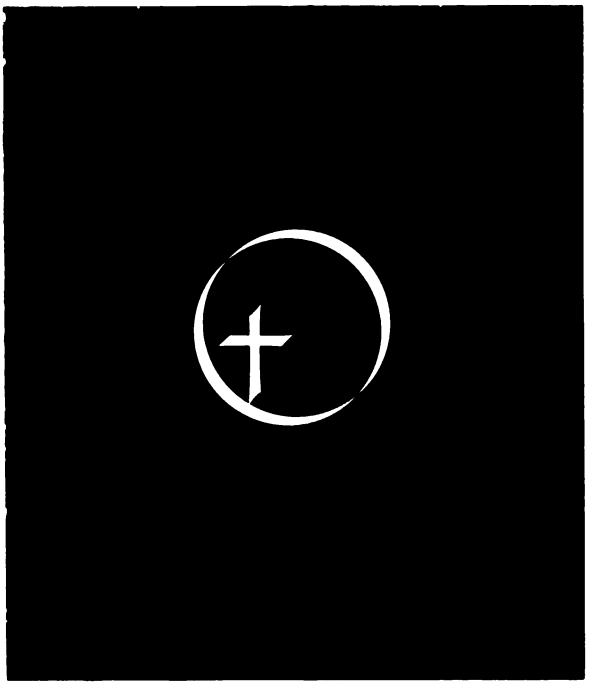

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# RELIGION FOR TO-DAY

BY

MINOT J. SAVAGE, D.D.

*" The first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and, behold, I make all things new "*

BOSTON
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# DEDICATION

IN GRATITUDE FOR THE LOVE WHICH HAS DONE EVERYTHING TO
KEEP ME FROM BEING HOMESICK IN A NEW CITY, AND
FOR THE WELCOME AND SYMPATHETIC LISTENING
GIVEN TO MY WORDS, I DEDICATE THIS
BOOK, THE FIRST-FRUITS OF
MY NEW YORK WORK,

TO THE

**Church of the Messiah**

1044

# PREFACE.

THE chapters in this volume are only some of the sermons preached in the Church of the Messiah during the early months of this year,— 1897. As no word of any one of them was ever written, they have the faults and, it is hoped, some of the virtues of free speaking.

Those who are familiar with my work during the past twenty-two years in Boston will note many repetitions of thought. Indeed, I have not cared to avoid it. I have tried to meet the wants of this new field as though I had never occupied any other. A man should not allow his own shadow to intimidate him. So the book will help those whom it will help, and others — will not read it.

NEW YORK, May, 1897.

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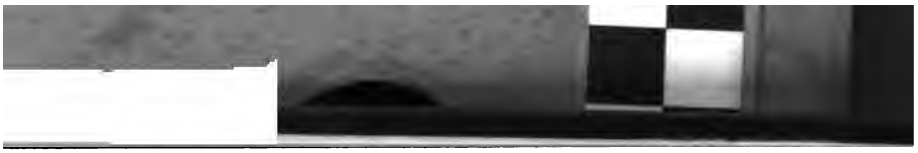
# PRESENT RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS.

It is not an uncommon thing to find people discussing the question as to which is the more important element of religion, the head or the heart, the emotional side or the thought side, the power or the intelligence. It has always seemed to me a very strange question. As though there could be any possibility of doubt on the subject! And yet you find whole denominations distinguished for the manifestation of emotion in religion, and feeling that this is the one thing of chiefest importance of all.

On the other hand, you will find certain denominations — and we Unitarians are accused of it very commonly — where there is supposed to be an undue development of the intellectual side, which are spoken of as critical and cold. It is possible that the one side should be over-developed at the expense of the other; and yet it seems to me that there is no sort of question that the two are of equal importance, and neither one of them can be slighted without serious detriment to the total result.

Suppose you should find the people on board a great steamer in mid-ocean discussing the question as to which was the more important, the engine down in the hold or the man at the wheel with the compass and chart. Would you consider it a sensible discussion for anybody to engage in? Without the engine in the hold there is no movement; without the man at the wheel, with his compass and his chart,





there may be movement, but there is no intelligent, there is no safe movement.

Power alone, whether it be the wind or whether it be the power of religious emotion, may drive people, but whither? The wind or the engine may drive a ship towards port,— if it does it is purely an accident,— but unless there is a man at the wheel, it may just as readily drive the ship wildly in this direction or that, against an iceberg or upon the rocks. While, if you do not have the engine in the hold that is capable of generating steam that can be turned into motion of the ship,— if you do not have that, the man at the wheel is powerless. He may look over the wide waste of waters about him, and know in which direction he ought to move, but he has no power; so he stands intelligent but helpless.

Which, then, is the more important, the emotional or the intellectual side of religion? Each is equally important with the other; and both are needed, if religion, like a ship at sea, is ever to pursue an intelligent course and arrive at any desirable haven.

A hundred and fifty years ago the people of this country were substantially at peace in their religious ideas. The surface of the popular belief was unruffled; there was substantial agreement in regard to the religious and theological ideas which were held. And there are some people to-day who are at peace, enjoying a very desirable quiet.

Fortunate are you, friends, if any of you are here to-day who have inherited a belief that gives you satisfaction and comfort, which satisfies your intellectual demands upon it,— if you make any,— which gives you peace. Fortunate are you to have been sheltered from the influx of new thoughts and restless questionings which have invaded the

larger part of the modern world. Fortunate, I say, are you if you are still possessed of this kind of peace. But, as you look out over the world, you must recognize the fact that the great majority of the people of this modern time of ours are not in possession of this peace; and perhaps, if you think about it a little carefully, you will question whether this kind of peace, which is simply quiescence, is, after all, the most desirable possession.

There is the peace of a pool that reflects the sun by day and the stars by night, the grasses and the trees upon its borders, and which has a certain amount of life in it for its surroundings; but it goes nowhere. There is another kind of peace,— the peace of the brook or of the mighty river, the peace of orderly movement, that carries boats, ships, the world's commerce, upon its bosom, and sails out towards the mighty ocean of God, that flows round and grasps the world.

There is the peace of a bird poised in the air with motionless pinion. There is the peace of the kingly eagle sweeping on his way in spite of storms and mighty winds, rejoicing in them in his power.

There is the peace of a ship at sea which, as Coleridge says in his " Ancient Mariner," floats

> " As idle as a painted ship
> Upon a painted ocean."

There is that more magnificent peace of one of our great liners, freighted, full of passengers, of life, of meaning, that laughs at the puny waves along its sides, and that treads its pathway across the ocean, laughing in the face of all the winds that buffet it. It seems to me that this life-peace, peace with motion, peace that goes somewhere, that has

some magnificent object, end, in view, is a grander peace than that of mere quiescence, that accepts things as they are and demands nothing more than that.

Fortunate, I say, are those of you who are at peace; for some of us who are not do at times become so weary of thinking! Now and then, some man, through shear weariness, just because he is tired out, drifts to some church where thinking is a sin, and finds the greatest intellectual rest. Fortunate, I say, in one way, are you who are at peace.

But you must remember, friends, that there are thousands on thousands of men and women in the modern world who neither do nor can share this quiescent peace with you, for better or worse, and we must simply face the facts which we cannot help. These people are adrift; they do not share the old ideas. They have outgrown them, shall I say? If that is intimating too much, at this stage of my discussion, let us simply say that they have drifted away from them, or gone back from them. At any rate they do not possess the old-time belief which gave their fathers peace and quiet in their religious ideas. They are filled with doubt and question,— not in regard to trifling matters, but concerning the deep-down problems of life.

I have had questions asked me since I have been with you these few weeks to answer which would keep me busy for two years,— questions that take hold of the very foundations of things, questions that people need to have answered in order hopefully and manfully and womanly to live.

These questions then, I say, are in all the air, and they have disturbed and troubled thousands on thousands of people in this modern world. And who are these people?

They are not the bad people, they are not the people that anybody would call wicked people, they are not the ignorant people. You will find the great majority of the ignorant people not much disturbed by these questions. It is the people who read and think who doubt and ask questions; and among these people are some of the mightiest and noblest of men, the leaders of the world. You would not call Herbert Spencer a bad man nor an ignorant man. No one would think of accusing Mr. Tyndall or Mr. Huxley of undervaluing moral laws or disregarding truth. They are not the people who are careless about these things.

There never was such an earnest truth-seeking, such a feverish desire for truth in the history of this world as characterizes the leaders of the world's thought and life in this nineteenth century of ours. It is the best people, it is the most intelligent people, who above all things desire truth, who are asking these questions.

This is simply a statement of fact which we must recognize for better or worse, whatever its meaning may be. And let us face another point right here.

Those people who never have any doubts, and those people who have doubts and feel guilty on account of them, might as well recognize the fact that doubt is sometimes just as much of a religious duty as is belief. It is just as much a man's business to doubt that which cannot produce its credentials as it is to accept that which can. How else shall we sift the false from the true? Doubt is just as true a virtue as is faith; and all of us doubt. The person who thinks he or she has never had a doubt in the world, if you ask a few questions, will reveal the fact that all that which is not accepted is doubted or denied, whatever it may be.

The fact that we believe one thing means that we do not

believe that which is excluded by this. And let us remember that doubt may have reverence and regard for God and the tenderest religious qualities about it. As Tennyson, one of the most profoundly religious natures of this generation, has sung,—

> "There lives more faith in honest doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the creeds."

The man who is doubting merely as a preliminary to finding out what is true is facing Godward and only anxious for light.

In order to answer the great questions on which a happy and successful life depend, we must use these intellects of ours which God has given us. It seems to me one of the greatest misfortunes of the world to have intelligence and then to find out that it is wicked to use it. Why are we so weighted and hampered with this incessant demand to question and think and discover and know, if we are told that it is only a temptation of the devil after all, and we must shut our eyes and blindly accept something,— what?

Note here, friends, that, if you ever give any reason for the position you hold, then you assume, in spite of yourselves, the absolute supremacy of reason in the last resort. Why are you a Christian? Why are not you a Mohammedan? Why not a Buddhist? Why are you a member of this denomination or that? The moment you attempt to give an intelligent answer to that, you give a reason, as Paul says you ought, for the faith that is in you. And the moment you give a reason, you appeal to reason as the court of last resort. In other words, though you may think rationalism is a dreadful thing, you are rationalistic in spite of yourselves.

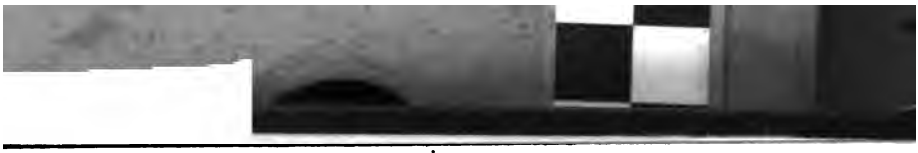
Why do you accept this Bible, and not the Koran? The moment you give a reason, you mean that reason is competent to pronounce on problems connected with this Bible. If you deny the function of reason, then think,— there is no reason left why you should be even a Christian, no reason left why you should believe one thing more than another, and you are all afloat in a vast and unsettled sea of doubt!

We must use the reason which God has given us to light us on our way. Even Jesus appealed to this rationalism as the supreme thing in regard to matters of duty, and said, "Why even of your own selves judge ye not what is right?"

We take, then, the authority of Jesus for placing reason as the supreme court in which these great problems are finally to be settled.

A sea captain in mid-ocean takes the sun, as we say, at noon, and then he examines his chart, and knowing the port from which he sailed, he finds out where he is; and having found out where he is, he has no practical question as to the next step, as to which way he is to sail in order to reach the harbor for which he originally set out.

It seems to me that in order to comprehend some of these problems with which we are to deal in some of these following Sundays, we need, in the first place, if possible, to find out where we are. We need to comprehend in general outline the present religious conditions of the world. How shall we do it? I have given it a great deal of thought during the past week. I do not wish to dwell on it at so great length as to give it disproportionate place or time; and it has seemed to me that perhaps, by presenting the matter through an illustration like that upon which I am about to enter, I could do it as satisfactorily as in any other way.





Suppose a full grown and intelligent man were placed suddenly upon this planet for the first time. He wishes to find out what is true in regard to matters of religion. What will he do? He will naturally start out on a tour of investigation; he will wish to ask those who claim to have authority in such matters and find out where they stand. Now let us follow this supposed man on this tour of investigation for a little, and in that way find out what are the present religious conditions of the world.

And note, friends, one thing: I beg you, if I use any denominational name, or if I refer to any man prominent in the religious life of the modern world, never for a moment think I am going to attack any denomination or any man, or that I am going to criticise them in any unkind way. My purpose is simply to know facts, to see where we are. That is, instead of criticising, I wish to define things.

Now this man who wishes to find out the present religious condition of the world, if he begins by asking some of the great general questions, will find himself face to face with a strange fact like this: he will discover that Christendom, the great majority of Christian people, claim that God has given a miraculous, supernatural, infallible revelation of his will to the world. But fronting that claim he will find another fact: that it was not given until the world had been wandering on its dark and hopeless way for a hundred or two hundred thousand years, and that, on this theory, all these people, countless billions on billions of souls, had gone to eternal loss without having had the slightest opportunity to know that there was any God or that he had any will to reveal to them.

And then he will be confronted with another fact quite as strange and startling,— that, since this supposed revelation

was given to the world, less than a third of all the people that live on the planet have heard of it. Not a third of the inhabitants of the world to-day know that there is any such thing in existence as our Bible, or any Christian claim of revelation; and yet we are asked to believe that all these people are plunging ceaselessly into the seething abyss of eternal woe.

If he asks a little further he will find that the majority of the people in Christendom do not accept the Church's claim in regard to this book. That is, that God, omnipotent and all-wise, and wishing to reveal himself, yet has not made the matter so clear that all honest people are compelled to accept the claim as made.

Then he will inquire further, as he looks over Christendom itself, and he will find the Greek Church claiming to be the original one, looking upon the Catholic Church and all Protestant Churches as parvenues and upstarts, and wilful perverters of the truth. He will find the Catholic Church making the same claim, and looking upon the Greek Church and all Protestant Churches as perverters of God's truth. He will find the Protestant Church divided up into no end of denominations, each claiming that its own interpretation of the infallible truth is the correct one. How would the man inquiring after some Scriptural authority for religious truth be baffled and bewildered! If he still went to the Catholic Church, and investigated its claims still more, he would find that it asserts that it, and it alone, is the organized infallible body of God on earth, and that, if a person is sacramentally connected with that body, he partakes of its life as the limb does of the trunk of a tree, and so has his final safety assured.

But he will find that this same Catholic Church, as the

ages go by, is losing its hold on the intelligence of men; that is, the more intelligent people become the less they are ready to accept its claims to be the one representative of God on earth.

Go back two or three hundred years and you will find all Europe in the grasp of the Catholic Church. To-day there is only one country that it holds with the same old-time power, and that is a country that is off the track of modern civilization and plays no part in the policy of the modern world,— that is Spain.

You will find that education, you will find that politics, you will find that philosophy, you will find that science, you will find that art,— all these great branches of human life that used to be absorbed by and utterly subservient to the Church,— have now thrown off its claim and are free. You will find that the late pope has therefore solemnly banned modern civilization as godless.

We can hardly accept the claim of a church that, asserting that it has God behind it and in it, is losing its grip on the modern intelligent world, and, as the world grows more intelligent, is waning in power. We cannot believe, friends, whatever else we do, that God is losing his control over this little planet, and that it is going all wrong, against his will and in spite of his omnipotence.

Suppose this same investigator turned to the Protestant Churches, what would he find? He would find that at the time of the Reformation an infallible book was set up. He would note that the claim of absolute infallibility for this book was never made in the history of the Church until this sixteenth century. Do you know that the canon of the Bible was never authoritatively declared until the sixteenth century? and are you aware of the fact that Luther and

Calvin considered themselves perfectly at liberty to criticise the Bible as they would any other book, and even to reject certain of its books as unworthy of a place in the canon? This claim was never made by the Bible itself; it was never made by the Church until the necessity arose to pit one infallibility against another. You will find that great Anglican teachers to-day — queen's chaplains and leading scholars of the English Church — will tell you the Bible is simply the record of the teachings of the early Church and of no more authority than the utterances of the Church to-day.

This, I say, is what this earnest investigator of truth would discover. He would find a certain world-scheme including the fall, the loss of the race, supernatural redemption, and endless rewards and punishments; and he would find this general scheme, which is familiar to you all as the old Protestant belief, held as authoritatively revealed divine truth.

He would find, however, that at the present time only a very few of the Church, those who claim that they have not changed, any longer accept this belief. That is, that which Protestantism declares to be the clear teaching of the infallible book in the sixteenth century is to-day regarded in its entirety as the clear reading of that book by almost none of the Orthodox Protestant Churches themselves. You will find now and then a man like Dr. Gardner Spring — formerly of the old Brick Church in this city — who, when asked why God did not save more souls, said, quietly and complacently, he supposed that God saved just as many souls as he wanted to.

You will find now and then a man like Mr. Moody,— I am not going to criticise him; Mr. Moody is earnest, Mr. Moody is in dead earnest, he is consistent with his belief,

as the great majority of those who claim to share that belief with him are not; I have only words of praise for him, occupying the position that he does; he is doing what thousands of other men in this country ought to be doing if they half believe what they say they do,— but Mr. Moody says that we must accept the story of Jonah and the whale or else we must give up God; he said this within a week or two. Why? Because, according to his idea, we have no reason for believing either in God or Jonah except this book. He has turned the matter right around from the way I put it. I think it is religion that creates Bibles, and not Bibles that create religion.

Now he would find a few persons holding these beliefs unchanged. But if he looked into the great, grave, earnest Orthodox Churches he would find that there modern thought and modern question are creeping in; he would find Dr. Briggs of the Union Theological Seminary discussing the higher criticism, which means, plainly stated, that the Bible in all its parts and verses is not infallible. That is what it comes to, whether you call it higher criticism or any other kind of criticism.

He would find that heresy is a matter of geographical distribution: that one man is prosecuted for heresy in one part of the country and another goes undisturbed in another part, though each holds the same beliefs.

The point I wish to bring out is simply that there is no fixed standard on the part of any branch of the Church. He would find not only these men to whom I have referred, but other men like Dr. Lyman Abbott, like Dr. Heber Newton, like Dr. Washington Gladden, of Columbus, Ohio, like the leading men in New Haven, like nearly all the professors at Andover,— he would find these gladly accepting the

designation of "Liberal Orthodox." And what does that mean? It means, when you interpret it and put it in straight clear English, that they have given up the old-time belief in almost every single one of the points that used to be regarded as absolutely essential; that is what it means.

Dr. Gordon of the Old South Church in Boston no longer believes in the old-time Trinity; he freely criticises the Bible and treats it as literature, as he would any other book. He declares that the old Calvinism leads to atheism and says it has got to be given up in order to save Christianity. He is frankly Universalist in his outlook over the next world.

These men our seeker would find, indicating how widespread these different varieties of belief are.

And then he would find the great mass of people, where? Outside of the churches he would find Secularists, noble, true, honorable men. I have been acquainted with hundreds of them, some of the finest men who ever lived, who believe religiously, if we may use the Hibernicism, that religion is a thing of the past; they say that religion is superstition, and it is being outgrown, and that humanity is coming to take its place. You find noble men like Felix Adler and his followers here, and those of a similar name in other cities, who are engaged in the moral training and uplifting of the world, but who voluntarily turn their backs on what we call religion.

He would find a noble body of agnostics. I am not an agnostic, I believe it is false science and bad philosophy; but I cannot treat it with contempt when men like Huxley feel that since this great infinite universe has been revealed they are overwhelmed with the magnitude of it and must bow their heads in simple humility and say "I do not know."

Ask him about God: "I do not know." About the soul: "I do not know." About the future life: "I do not know." He says, "These are such great problems I have given them up; I am going to live as well as I can and help the world as well as I can, but I postpone what from my point of view is a needless discussion."

Then he would find a great body of men,— thousands on thousands of them here in this city of New York, bankers, lawyers, merchants, physicians,— who are where? They say, Since all the scientific and philosophic doctors disagree and are at swords' points, what is the use of my wearying my brain about it at all? They will help the ministers, they will help the churches in their philanthropic work and think, "Let them believe what they will about the next world, I do not know and do not care; I am going to do as well as I know, I am going to live a clean life and an honest, because that is the only sensible one for a man to live. I am going to do what I can to relieve the burden of human sorrow; but the churches can go their own way, they do not interest me, they do not feed me, they do not help me, and it seems to me they are spending most of the time in discussing matters which are not practical, and which the world up to this time has never been able to settle."

This is the way great masses of men in the modern world are coming to feel.

Now, friends, where are we? What claim do we, these few Unitarian Churches, make? what claim do I make, on behalf of one of them?

My claim may seem to you an unreal one, an unreasonable one, may seem to you a very presumptuous one; but I believe, friends, with my whole soul, that we stand for the principles which are to rule the world in the coming thou-

sands of years. For why? We believe in and respect the heart, the emotional, the feeling side of religion. We believe also in and respect the intellectual side, and demand for it its rights; and we believe that these great thousands of people have gone out of the churches because there was not room enough in the churches for the intellectual development and freedom that the modern world demands.

The dome of the coming temple of God must be as wide as the sky. Suppose you grant freedom; is there any danger that we are going to fall out of the keeping of or wander beyond the reach of the Almighty? The old Psalmist believes more than that,—"If I ascend into heaven Thou art there; if I descend into the abyss Thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Thy hand shall lead me and Thy right hand shall hold me."

This universe, friends, is infinite. God's truth is infinite as the universe. Draw a circle, and however large it may be in circumference, however wide in its diameter, if you set any limits you fence out more of God and truth than you fence in; for God is infinite and his truth is as wide as his universe, which he thrills and permeates in every part.

I believe, then, in preserving all the reverences, all the worships, all the loves, all the aspirations, all the emotions, all the impulses of the past and of the human heart to-day; and I believe that the calm, clear, trained intellect should sit on high and in view of the wide range of things, looking before and after, should guide all these mighty forces to their beneficent and magnificent ends.

I believe in God as I never believed in him before,—I shall have occasion before I am through with this series of sermons to tell you how and why. I believe in religion as

I never believed in it before. I shall also tell you concerning this, how and why. I believe in revelation, an infallible revelation of divine truth, so infallible that no intelligent man can doubt or deny. I believe in incarnation, the coming of God into the human in a more magnificent and grander way than I ever believed in all the days when I held to the theology of the past. I believe in the human soul, its sonship to God, the eternal spiritual Father. I believe in communion between the child-soul and the Infinite soul that ever folds us in his arms. As Tennyson says,

> "Speak to him, thou, for He hears,
> And spirit with spirit may meet.
> Closer is He than breathing
> And nearer than hands and feet."

I believe, not in the resurrection of the body,— for we have left behind us, those of us who have fifty years, several bodies already which we would not care to have resurrected. We do not believe that the soul goes down, and so it does not need to come up again. We believe in the ascent of the soul at death. I do not believe in death, friends. I believe in life; for death is nothing more than going to sleep at night to wake up again in the morning; and I am not afraid of it any longer.

I believe, then, in the eternal life, in the eternal opportunity and the eternal advance. These are some hints as to the position occupied by this little group of churches, that claim to represent and speak for the new Word of God to the modern world. We are in the minority. And we would say, with humility and not in boasting, that all leadership is always in the minority. Notice an army on the march; the vanguard is always few, then comes the main body, and then

the stragglers and camp followers in the rear. The leaders of the world in any department,— education, government, science, art, philosophy, ethics, religion,— the leaders of the world are always few. When the main body of the army gets to where the vanguard is to-day, the vanguard will still be ahead and in the minority forever.

I believe, then, that we represent the living God, the newer and truer and deeper revelation, the higher and broader incarnation, the soul and the eternal hope. If you choose to follow me as I take up some of these great problems one after another, you will find that there is little that is negative, much that is positive, and that we stand for the larger and grander hope of the larger and grander Church that is to be.

# CAUSES OF PRESENT RELIGIOUS UNREST.

OUR fathers knew very little about this world, but they assumed that they knew all about the next.

Last Sunday morning I touched on the present conditions of uncertainty, confusion, and contradiction as manifested in the religious thought and condition of the world. It is my purpose this morning to point out certain things that have happened in recent times to make this confusion, contradiction, necessary,— perfectly natural. In order to do this, I shall need to go back for a little and outline that which you are so familiar with that you very rarely estimate its significance ; that is, the conditions of human thought two or three hundred years ago concerning the universe and man and destiny.

You find these pictured graphically, with poetic power and beauty, in the " Divina Commedia " of Dante, so far as the spirit world is concerned. You find a completer conception still in the " Paradise Lost " and the " Paradise Regained " of Milton ; and Milton's great epic, or his two epics, rather, have the advantage for our purpose over the work of Dante, of covering the entire scheme of this life as well as of the other,— that is, taking in what people then believed they knew to be God's eternal plan and purpose in human creation and in human redemption.

Let us notice for a moment the barest, simplest outlines of that scheme.

Our fathers thought they knew what God was doing in the eternity that preceded the creation of the world. They tell us, in their theological creeds and schemes, how the three persons of the Trinity consulted together, entered into covenant with each other, and made out the general plan of human history.

There was war in heaven. A third part of the angels, following Satan in revolt against divine authority, was cast out into the abyss. To fill this vacancy in heaven so that the number of those who should see, rejoice in, and utter the divine glory might not suffer by diminution, God determined to create this world and humanity.

Scarcely was his work completed before it was invaded by the leader of those who had been in revolt on high. Sin blighted God's plan and purpose. Our first parents fell; they were cast out of Paradise. All their descendants were doomed through all time not only, but all eternity.

God then decided that he would choose certain ones out of this vast mass to be saved, to be taken to heaven. He sent his angels with his messages. He selected one man, then his children, then the nation that was born of them, to be the recipients of his favor, to be taught and trained. He sent prophets. In the fulness of time He came himself in the second person of the Trinity, lived here in the world, was crucified, descended into hell, suffered in hell all the pangs that those who were to be saved would have suffered, had they been lost, through all eternity. This suffering was concentrated into three days and nights. Then he broke from the bounds of hell, escaped, and ascended on high.

This gospel was to be preached among all nations. Those who were elected were to be saved; the rest were to

be passed by and permitted to illustrate the glory of God's justice, as the saved would illustrate the glory of his grace. Then the world was to be burned up; that which had been created was to be destroyed, and the saved and the lost were to inhabit their fixed places and conditions throughout eternity.

This is the general scheme which our fathers believed they knew. It is the scheme outlined, as clear cut as an intaglio, in the great work of Milton. And Milton's work was not poetry only, it crystallized popular thought and what was practically universal Protestant belief.

The people rested in this for several hundred years. This was the peace, the quiescent condition of things, to which I referred last Sunday; but that peace no longer remains. You and I are not responsible for the breaking up of that peace: we simply observe, study, try to find out what it means so that we may comprehend our present duty.

Now I wish you to note some few things that have happened in this modern world to account for the break-up of common belief in this once generally accepted scheme of things.

What has happened? I wish, before I point out specifically the things that have taken place, to call your attention to one or two facts and principles, and make them as emphatic as I can.

You are to note, if you will,— and I beg that you will, because, if you do not, you will misunderstand, and then, if you speak of it, you will misrepresent me,— I beg you to note that religion, as the word is popularly used, includes two quite distinct things: First it means the spirit, the life. Then it means a body of thought, of intellectual conception, of dogmatic statement. And I beg you to notice that the

body may grow, may change, may be completely outgrown, and the spirit not only not die, but only become grander and finer through the process.

Take an illustration. My personal identity has remained unchanged from the time when I was a little babe in my mother's arms,— through childhood, through youth, through young manhood, through mature manhood; and if I live long enough it will remain unchanged through old age and even to the time when I discard this body altogether.

And I beg you to note another fact. During this time, while my soul has maintained its personal identity,— though I trust it has grown and deepened and heightened and become a little sweeter and nobler,— I have not only modified my body, but I have successively discarded at least ten or fifteen entire bodies.

The identity then and the growth of the soul do not depend upon keeping the body unchanged, or even upon maintaining the same body.

I wish now that you shall note carefully, before I proceed any farther, one more fact. I have heard it said a great many times that the minister makes a mistake when he introduces anything touching science into the pulpit; that the lecture-room is the place for science; that it is irrelevant in the pulpit, which ought to be devoted to religion.

Remember, however, friends, what I have just said: that religion is made up of two parts, a soul and a body; and the body of every religion that ever existed on the face of the earth from the beginning of human history until now is pure and simple science,— must be in the nature of things.

Did you never notice that this Bible begins with science?

The first thing in it is science. Is not the old Hebrew conception of the creation of the universe and man, the method of creation, just as much science as Darwinism is science, or chemistry is science, or geology is science? It is all science, and nothing else. Only it is crude, traditional, childish science, the science of the childhood world, not even Hebrew in its origin, but borrowed from the Persians or the Babylonians. It is simply what came to be the Hebrew traditional story such as every nation on the face of the earth has had and told.

Let us remember, then, that all our theologies, however old they may be, though we may have forgotten all about it,— all our theologies spring out of scientific conceptions of things, of necessity must. So that a minister to-day is only doing what ministers in all ages have done if he appeals to the scientific conception of things. It is simply a question as to whether he is to deal with that which is true and demonstrated science or whether he is to deal with the exploded scientific conceptions of the past which the world, at least outside of the churches, has long ago outgrown.

Now what has happened? In the first place, since this scheme of theology which I have outlined took shape in the minds of men, we have discovered a new universe.

Let me indicate what it means. We are a part of it, we are in the drift and swim so that we do not notice its significance, the natural and necessary result of the great facts involved. We do not half appreciate how wonderful the universe is. We talk about the sun's rising and setting, though we know it does neither. We constantly find ourselves holding Ptolemaic conceptions from which we are not yet free. How young is the Copernican universe in which

we are living, and how great is it compared with the Ptolemaic conceptions in which our theology grew up, of which it is a part and to which it fitted!

Let me indicate. It was thirty-six years after the town of Boston was settled when Milton in London took out a license permitting him to publish "Paradise Lost." "Paradise Lost" has as its frame-work the Ptolemaic universe. Milton had heard about the Copernican universe just as thousands of people to-day have heard about Darwinism. We are not sure as to whether he accepted it. At least he did not regard it as best fitted for his purpose; so he adapted his epic to the Ptolemaic universe, which was the commonly accepted one of the time.

What was that universe? I cannot go into an elaborate description of it now. I simply wish to tell you that the earth was fixed at the centre, that there were concentric spheres, as real as a series of glass globes inside of each other, and to these spheres were fixed the moon, then the sun and the planets; and then to a sphere outside of these were attached the fixed stars, all of them in the same plane.

And how large was this universe? It was not nearly so large, friends, as we know to-day the orbit of the moon to be. The entire world of Milton was smaller than the orbit of the moon; for he tells us that when the angels were cast out of heaven it took them only nine days and nights to fall clear to the bottom of the universe.

How large is the universe to-day? Can I give you an illustration that shall set your thought free?

Let us start with our solar system. Look up at night to the sky. As we survey the scene, this solar system of ours, the sun and its attending planets, looks as if packed in thick in a mass of other stars. And yet a little fleet of

yachts in the middle of the Atlantic, with not a living thing between it and all its shores, would be crowded in comparison with the isolation and loneliness of our sun with its attendant planets.

It takes light, they tell us, about eight minutes and a half to travel from the sun to the earth, something like ninety-two and a half millions of miles. Let this same light leave the outermost member of our solar system and travel towards the nearest star, and it will have to speed on its lightning-like flight for three years and a half before it reaches our next-door neighbor. And when you are there, after that journey of three years and a half, you are only standing on the threshold and looking out in every direction along star-lighted pathways that reach on, and on, and on to infinity.

This is the universe that has taken the place of the one in which our little, petty, crude, ignorant, man-made theological schemes have grown. The old theology was a part of the Ptolemaic universe, fitted as a picture in a frame, belonging to it. But it is utterly impossible that it should continue to live in this Copernican universe that has taken its place.

There is no room in this universe for any single one of the conceptions that made up the old-time scheme.

Another thing has happened. Although Luther and his compeers, as well as the great Catholic authorities of his day, attacked the teachings of Copernicus with the utmost bitterness, claiming that they were atheistic, and that in them was the seed of destruction to the theology which he believed to be true,— still, in the main, people did not comprehend what was going on any more than they do to-day, and the old belief continued in the popular mind. But the

process of its disintegration was begun, and it is going on to-day.

When Newton discovered the law of gravity, he again was attacked, because it was said he was taking the management of the universe out of the hands of God and putting it into the keeping of a law. And there is a great deal of such shallow talk going on in the modern world,— as though people had not thought deeply enough to know that law is only a name for an eternal process; and that that process can be nothing else than one of the manifestations of the present, living, tireless God.

Another thing happened,— the science of geology. And let me ask right here, Is it not strange that people do not stop long enough to think with a little reverence and a little care? If we can read accurately what has been written on the rock record under our feet, we can say as the old astronomer Kepler said when he discovered the law of planetary motion, "O God, I think over again thy thoughts after thee."

If, I say, we can read the rock record under our feet, we are reading what God has written in very truth, as if by his own immediate finger. It is God's work and God's record of his work; and, if it does not happen to agree with what some unknown man imagined to be the truth two or three or five thousand years ago, which shall we accept,— the present God speaking to us, or what somebody thought about it thousands of years ago in the days of the world's ignorance, when all the while we do not know who that somebody was, or what his source of information might be?

As a matter of fact, there grew up this science of geology based on the facts as to God's method of making his world. It was a part of the old scheme that God made the world

suddenly out of nothing in six days and then rested. Geology discovered that the process of creation has been going on for millions of years, and that it is going on to-day in precisely the same way that it has always been going on. That is, that creation is a continuous process, always begun and never finished.

We discovered that the order of the creative world was not the order of the first chapters of Genesis. We discovered that there was a mistake in the popular theological conception both as to the method and the time; and there is no question, friends, as to which is true. There have been many and many vain attempts made to reconcile between the Book and the rocks, but they have all crumbled to pieces at the touch of anything like honest and open-eyed investigation, until at last the scholarship of the world knows that God has told the truth in his rocks, whatever may become of certain old-time traditions.

Another science has grown up,— the science of archæology. And what has that taught us? As geology taught us the antiquity of the earth, this has taught us the antiquity of man. We know now — it is no question for intelligent people to discuss — that man was not created six thousand years ago, nor ten thousand years ago. We know that he has been on this planet for two or three hundred thousand years at least.

So this part of the old theological scheme has also had to be given up.

Another thing has happened. There has sprung up the great universal philosophy and science that goes by the name of "evolution." The first propounder of this in the modern world was Herbert Spencer. His work includes the worlds as well as man. Then, occupying a

province of this universal dominion, came the work of Mr. Darwin, published in 1859. Mr. Darwin wrought out his great truths in the domain of what is called the science of biology,— the method of the development of life.

And now, friends, here again it is no longer a question; it is not something that intelligent and educated people debate. Now and then, indeed, prominent theologians,— I will not name any names, because I do not wish to mar what I am saying by a ripple of laughter over anything,— prominent theologians, who show by the first words they utter that they do not know what they are talking about, undertake to discuss it; but there is not a competent and free-minded intelligence to-day on the face of the earth that does not know that the general theory of evolution is as much established science as is the Copernican theory of the universe. There may be any number of questions about subsidiary matters, matters of detail; but the great general truth is at last accepted.

What does this mean? It means that man was not created suddenly, outright, in a Garden of Eden or anywhere else. It means that man belongs to the great order of life-development, which began on the far-off shores of primeval seas, and has developed through fishes, through reptiles, through birds, through mammals, up to man, who leads the march of life in its so-far advance.

Let me interject one thing right here. There are thousands of people in the modern world who still suppose that Mr. Darwin teaches that we are descended from the ape. He teaches nothing of the sort; and no intelligent man ever supposed he did,— at least, no one who has taken the trouble to find out.

Mr. Darwin teaches that we are descended, or ascended,

from the animal; and it is true, too, established over and over again, so that no competent thinker to-day ventures to doubt the general fact.

What does this mean? I have no time to enter fully into it to-day; it means, however, that there never has been any fall of man, but that there has been ascent from the beginning. I shall go into this more at length, and make it, I trust, perfectly clear before I am through with this course of sermons.

But let me say right here that this one fact alone, logically carried out, compels a complete reconstruction of all the theological theories of the past; for there is not a single one of the doctrines that enter into and make up the schemes that have been taught by the churches for hundreds of years that did not come into being as part of a plan to save man from the fall. If there has been no fall, if evil is to be explained, as I believe it is, in entirely another way, then all these doctrines which are logically a necessary part of this "plan of salvation" must be reconsidered.

I have no time to go into that any further to-day, for I must mention one or two other things that have happened.

When England first made conquest of India, I suppose there were very few people in the world who had any idea that any important intellectual and religious results were to follow. It was a purely commercial venture at the outset; but what did it mean?

It meant the discovery of the Rig-Veda, the old Sanscrit Bible; and it was the beginning of a series of discoveries, until to-day we have come into intelligent contact with all the great religions of the world, and we have studied and translated and read all the great Bibles of the world. Do you know that the Buddhists have their Bibles which they

believe are as thoroughly inspired and as completely infallible as our own? And this same thing is true of nearly all the great religions. And let us frankly admit that they have precisely the same reason for holding their belief concerning their Bibles that we have for holding ours concerning our Bible.

We have thus seen religions in the making, we have discovered Bibles in process of growth, and we have learned what I hinted last Sunday, or a Sunday before, that Bibles do not create religion, but that religions create Bibles,— as they do priesthoods and all the thousand things that manifest and express the religious life.

What is the result of this discovery and study of the world religions and the Bibles of the world?

When I was a boy I was taught that the religions of the world were divided into two classes. In one was Christianity alone, called the "true" religion. In the other class were all the other religions of the world, labelled "false." I was taught to believe that they were the invention of devils, or the perverted and evil work of priesthoods and wicked men.

But what does the intelligent man hold to-day? We believe, as Emerson has sung so beautifully, that

> "Out of the heart of nature rolled
> The burdens of the Bible old,"—

and the burdens of all the Bibles; and we believe that all the religions of the world are simply the earnest attempts — on the part of ignorant and foolish people, if you like, but earnest attempts, the best they were capable of making at the time — to find God, "feeling after him who is not far from every one of us."

If they have not been able to speak in clear language, they have lisped; they may not have said the words that we say to-day, but they have said the best words they knew. My friend and fellow-worker, Mr. Collyer, said in his prayer this morning that the sweetest, the concentrated essence of all religions was in the words, "our Father." How many of you know that the oldest name in the religious literature of the world, in this old Sanscrit Bible to which I referred a moment ago, is "Heaven-Father"? How many of you know that the Greek *Zeus pater* is simply the Greek equivalant of the Sanscrit *Dyaus pitar*? How many of you know that the word *Jupiter* is only the Roman equivalent of *Dyaus pitar*, Heaven-Father, the old name that the race tried to lisp in its childhood?

We no longer look, then, to these other religions from our height of superiority, treating them with contempt or regarding them as utterly evil and wicked. We believe that God hears the man in China, the man in India, in Central Africa, in the Islands of the Southern Seas, no matter what word he uses when he tries to give utterance to the name of the invisible Father that he thinks of as his creator and the maker of all this wonderful universe of ours.

There is another thing that has happened. I hinted at this in another connection not a great while ago. Men and women have become civilized in some parts of the world; and civilization means not only truer thinking, it means a more humane feeling, it means justice, it means something of tenderness and pity; and, as the result of this, many parts of the old creeds have been put one side, though there has been no formal abandonment of them, because the civilized, tender, just, loving, helpful man no longer could hold them.

I was talking with an orthodox lady during the past week. I did not introduce the subject,— I never presume to introduce these things in private houses unless I am asked,— and she spoke of one of the very fundamental points of the old creed which is still taught, and the foundation stone of the church which she attends, as something "horrible" which she no longer believed. I raised the question, which she frankly admitted she had never considered, as to whether she could give that up and still keep all the rest which depended on it, and would never have been heard of if it had not been there.

There are many of these points, and many of them are given up; but people do not carry out the lesson logically, of which this case just cited is a sample. But quietly, perhaps unconsciously, one inherited opinion after another is dropped, without thought or care as to whether the rest can be consistently held or not.

And so the process goes on,— that process which has caused all this uncertainty, confusion, and contradiction. Some people in some churches think a little way and surrender certain points; other people in other churches think a little further and surrender a little more, grasp grander things in place of them. And hence we see all these confused and irresponsible beliefs which we find held by the people of the present day.

Now, friends, a word at the end. What does all this mean? Does it mean that religion is in danger? So far from that, friends, I believe that religion is simply struggling to-day to free itself from these encumbrances which hold it down and hinder its growth towards the light, sunshine, and free air, up towards God's magnificent heaven.

It means simply a change of the theological conception

and framework of things. It means that the world of to-day, wiser in every other respect than was the universe of the past, is daring to let in the light, daring to think and accept the grander truth which God is revealing to his children.

As I have already said in other connections, I believe that, instead of religion passing away, we are in the time of its re-birth. There is to be a more magnificent religion, a grander Church than the past has ever dreamed of. We simply outgrow that which is crude, which is ignorant, which is cruel, which is untenable in broad, clear thinking. We are getting ready to build the new temple in which God shall manifest himself as he has not in the past, and that shall be full of light and love and peace for all mankind.

# IS RELIGION DYING?

ANY one whose studies include in their range the whole line of human progress from the beginning until to-day will become familiar with the fact that religions are not immortal. Hundreds of religions have been born, have grown old, have died. The entire pathway of human advance is strewn with the images of dead gods, of temples in ruins, of altars crumbling to decay, with books once held sacred as containing the very infallible word of life, but now looked upon only as curiosities of ancient thought.

One needs, of course, to take a long survey of human history to note how true this is. Two thousand years seem a great while; but when we remember that man has been on this earth at least three hundred thousand years, and has been thinking, feeling, fearing, hoping, through all those years, two thousand seem only a little while.

If you wish to note how religions that once towered on high and seemed impregnable from all assault, even the assault of time, have fallen, you may stand amid the ruins of Karnac or Baalbec, you may wander through India and note the remains of temples that once represented religions that were followed reverently by millions of worshippers.

Religions then are not immortal. But it is very different with the word when you drop the final "s." Religions die; religion is simply reborn and goes on forever. It is in the spiritual realm only what it is fabled to be in earthly

empire: "The king is dead!" cries the herald; and then before the sound of that call has ceased, he cries again, "Long live the king!" The persons die, the king never. So it is true of religions that they die, but religion never. Religion, out of what is called death,— or thought to be death by the friends or the enemies of any particular religion,— religion finds in this experience only a renaissance.

In order that I may make this clear, that we may answer our question as to whether religion is dying, and may be perfectly certain of our ground, I need only to give you something approaching an adequate definition of religion. People who think that religion is dying, good people who are afraid religion is dying, have simply not thought deeply enough or carefully enough to know what it is that is really taking place. Let us then, if we may, try to get a definition of religion, and then we can easily comprehend what it is that is going on.

I wish first to give a definition, as a scientist or a philosopher would, in abstract terms. I ask your patience for a moment while I do that; and then I shall try to translate it into the concrete, so that it will be very easily apprehensible by anybody.

Religion — and now let me say I am not defining my religion or your religion; I am not defining the religion of the Episcopalian or the religion of the Presbyterian; I am not defining Christianity, I am not defining any particular religion. I wish to create, if I may, a general definition that will cover and include any religion that ever existed or can exist; just as a scientist, for example, when he wishes to define the vertebrate, does not select any particular type of vertebrates but gives the characteristics which are com-

mon to all vertebrates. So I wish to give you those characteristics which you will see in a moment are common to all religions.

In the first place then, religion is man's thought concerning the relation which exists between himself and the power that is manifested in the universe, whatever his interpretation of that power may be. First, the thought.

Secondly, religion is emotion,— the feeling which accompanies this thought and which takes its characteristics from it. That is, if the thought is high and noble the feeling will correspond; if the thought is poor and mean the feeling will be petty, fearful, grovelling.

In the third place, the thought and the feeling always incarnate themselves in outward forms, manifest themselves in things, customs, practices.

There is my abstract definition. Now let me translate it for you into the concrete.

Take one typical illustration,— for it is one of the grandest religions of the world, and not being our own we can look upon it without any prejudice,— take the religion of the Hebrews; and let us go back to the time of Solomon and the magnificence of his temple. Suppose we could visit Jerusalem and see it in the condition in which it was at that time. We should be struck by the glory of its great temple, crowning the top of Mount Moriah; we should see the people thronging the gates, coming up for some one of the great festivals from all over the country. When we joined that throng and entered the precincts of the temple we should find its courts full of priests engaged in their various offices. We should find the blood of bulls and of goats and birds sacrificed running down from the altar. We should hear the chanting of some one of the old Psalms by the temple choir.

We should first see the High Priest enter the Holy of Holies, and then come out and sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice upon the people and pronounce absolution from their sins. We should see this whole external manifestation of the Hebrew religion. It would include such Scriptures as up to that period had become sacred in the popular mind.

Here is the external incarnation that I referred to of the thought and the feeling of the Hebrew people.

Now let us analyse a little deeper. Beyond this incarnation we should find that there were certain theories which were held by the priests and taught to the people as the truth,— the intellectual side of their religion. And what and how much does this include? It includes a theory of the universe. And note right here, friends, that there never has been a religion, from the beginning of the world up to to-day, that did not have as a frame-work a cosmology, that is, a scientific theory of things. That is where all religions start.

The Hebrew people had certain beliefs as to how the world was created, what kind of a world it was. They had a picture of it in their minds. They had certain ideas of the origin and nature of man,— ideas as to the relation in which men stood to their God, what their God wanted them to do, and why he wanted them to do it. Here was the intellectual side, you will see, what we to-day call the "theology" of it.

Then the third element I spoke of, emotion, fear, the awe, the reverence, the worship, the love, the delight in their God that the Psalmist so frequently sings; all this is the feeling side of religion.

Now note, friends, every religion that ever existed was made up of these three elements,— the thought side, the

theoretical; the feeling side, the emotional; and the cult, or the ceremonial side.

The ceremonial side includes altars, temples, priesthoods, rituals, Bibles, hymns, prayers, all the external manifestation of the religious life.

Now, all of these three parts exist in and make up every religion that the world ever saw. If you should go down and examine the worship of him who stands in fear and trembling before some fetish, you would find that he had his thought about his fetish, about the world, his theory of his own nature, his idea as to the relation in which he stood to this mysterious and unseen power. And you would find that all these three elements,— the thought side, the feeling side, the cult or theoretical side, exist down there.

If I should take you to Rome and ask you to examine with me all the magnificent display of the Romish ritual service, and you should look a little beneath the surface, you would find there the theoretical side, the feeling side, and the ceremonial side.

Come home and examine ours, our simpler, Puritan form of worship: we have our theology, our theory of the universe, and of God; we have our feeling, the emotional side, corresponding to our theoretical side; and then we have our ritual side, simple as it may be. Our cult is plain,— not gorgeous, not beautiful, not extended; but go through our service and you will find it, the same as all other religions, made up of these three parts.

What are the people after? Why do they have any religion at all? What is the essence of religion? What is the purpose, the meaning, the endeavor of it all?

Note, friends, from the very beginning of the world until

now it has been an endeavor on the part of men to find and get into better relations with the Unseen Power, with God. It has been an endeavor,— and here comes in my text,— it has been an endeavor, as Paul said, to be "reconciled to God." People have been conscious of evil, of wrong, of suffering, in the world; and they have felt, and rightly felt, that these did not belong to an ideal condition of things. They had their interpretation of these, their explanation as to how they came about. Generally they believed that God was angry with them and that these were punishments inflicted. So they have been trying to find out what God wanted them to do, and to do it.

Every religion, then, that ever existed has been an effort on the part of man to get into better relations with God. People have felt that they stood vitally connected in some way with this infinite, eternal Power. They have been conscious of the fact, which we recognize to-day more clearly than it was possible to recognize it in the past, that life, welfare, happiness,— all depend upon our knowing something about the laws of this infinite Power, and obeying those laws.

The degree of our physical health depends upon our knowledge of these laws, as embodied in our physical structure, and our obedience to them. Mental health, true moral and spiritual health and prosperity, all depend in their spheres upon precisely this same thing,— a knowledge of the laws of God and obedience to those laws.

This, then, has been what humanity has been seeking in all ages. They have felt that they were not in the ideal relations that ought to exist towards God, and the one thing that they have been after in all their religions has been to create these ideal relations. In other words, they have

had their thought about God and their thought about themselves, and then they have tried to get into better relations with God. "Be reconciled to God!" is the cry of every religion that ever existed.

And, friends, if anybody supposes that the modern world is going to outgrow religion, and so outgrow this necessity, I would only ask him to notice that "be reconciled to God," stated in other terms, is the last and highest word of science just as well as it is of religion. Herbert Spencer does not use the phrase of Paul in talking about being reconciled to God, but he does use "adjustment to our environment," and tells you if you wish to be well, or wish happiness or prosperity of any kind, you must become adjusted to your environment. And to the theist, who believes that God is our environment, that it is his power, his life, his law everywhere throughout the universe, being "reconciled to God" and being "adjusted to your environment" are only two ways of saying the same thing.

Suppose for a moment that you are an agnostic, and you think you are going to escape religion by wearing that name. Do you escape it? Think a moment. You say, "I do not know anything about the nature of the infinite Power manifested in this universe." Granted. This Power is here. As Herbert Spencer says, The existence of this infinite and eternal Power is the one item of knowledge of which we are more certain than of any other. This Power is here. It was here before you were born; it will be here after you have died. Meantime, as you are passing through this world, your health, your welfare, your prosperity, depend on knowing something about the laws of this Power and obeying them. You do not escape this relation which is the essence, the very soul, of the religious life.

Suppose you say, "I am an atheist," — go farther than the agnostic. What of it? Do you escape this relation any the more? Whether you say that this Power is God, or Spirit, or Nature, or Force, or It, it makes no difference; the Power is here and you are the child of that Power.

If you say there is nothing in all the wide range of the universe but dirt, then you are the child of dirt. You are the product of this universe; not only your body, but your brain, your thought, your conscience, your hopes, your fears, your loves.

Whatever theory you hold about the universe you are the child of it. It was here before you, it will be here after you disappear; and meantime, as I said before, all your life, your welfare, your happiness, depend upon so much of the knowledge of the laws of this universe as you possess and the degree of your obedience to those laws.

So, no matter what your theory, friends, you must deal with religion whether you will or no. You can no more escape it than an eagle can outfly the limits of the atmosphere in which he finds leverage for his wings. You can no more escape it than a ship captain can outsail the horizon which closes him round on every sea, on every shore.

The essence, then, the soul, of religion, is the sense of this relationship between the individual soul and his God, and the one purpose and aim of it is to better this relation, to get into right relations with God. So that religion, friends, though you may find some manifestations of it among barbaric people to be crude and cruel and unclean and low, religion in every nation and in every age has been the best endeavor the people of the time could make to find — what? *The secret of life,* — which lies in being rightly related to this infinite and eternal Power.

The moment, then, you get a clear and right definition of religion in your minds, you see beyond the possibility of question that religion is immortal, it cannot possibly pass away.

But something has been happening in all these ages; for, as I said at the outset, religions, hundreds of them, have been born, have grown to their maturity, have grown old, have died and faded out of the life of men. What is it that has been happening? My friends, it is the simplest thing in the world that has been happening, and it is the most hopeful thing in the world that has been happening: humanity, very slowly,—so slow that it is discouraging to watch the process,—humanity has been getting civilized; has been learning something; has been getting better ideas, clearer thoughts, more nearly correct theories of the world it is living in. That is the first thing that has been happening.

You examine any one of the crude cosmologies of some barbaric people, and you smile over them to-day. You say, "How ignorant those people were!" But they did the very best they knew at the time. They had their theory as to how the world was made, and why it was made, and who made it and what it was for; and that has become the creed side always of their religion. But, as the world has gone on, as man has developed in intellectual power, been able to think more broadly, accurately, as he has investigated and studied more widely, of course he has outgrown his childish conception of the universe, of how and when God made it, and what for, and has attained to ideas which are more nearly commensurate with the facts.

I would not for a moment assume that we to-day are through! The curse of all the theorizers of the past has

been just this assumption that they were through. As though anybody ever could get through, in an infinite universe! It has been the pettiest, the most conceited, most fallacious assumption that the world has ever known. But it has been made, as I shall have occasion to show a little later.

That which has been going on, then, has been a readjustment of men's thinking to bring it into accord with the facts of God.

Let me interject right there, friends, I wish you would remember all the time that these facts are God's; for, if we discover a fact, it is a divine fact. I hear people talking sometimes as though they thought scientific men were discovering these facts in order to perplex and disturb people.

When Galileo discovered the moons of Jupiter he upset all the theories of his time. He was not responsible for their being there; he simply happened to see them. So, when scientific men discover some new magnificent fact that compels a reconstruction of the theories that men have been holding, are they to blame? Who is to blame? If anybody is to blame is it not He who made it? Is it not well for us reverently to stop and consider that all facts are God's facts, and that when we presumptuously choose to deny or turn our backs on facts, we are turning our backs on God and his revelation?

If humanity, then, is to grow any, of course the partial, crude, the ignorant theories of the universe have to be outgrown. Just as when a child grows from being a child up to a man, he outgrows the little childhood world in which he lived, and enters his man's world or woman's world,—finer, grander in every conceivable way.

Not only, then, does the creed change, the creed must change if we grow wiser.

And right in here, friends, is the reason and the only reason why we Unitarians hold the position we do in regard to creeds, and which is sometimes thrown up to us by the question, "Why do you have no fixed creed?" Because a man who is climbing a mountain cannot have a fixed and final statement of what he sees. He may make one to-day; but, if he climbs another mile, he gets another view of things and has to reconstruct it. I am perfectly willing to make you a creed of any length if you will only give me time, stating what I believe to-day. But I will not promise not to learn something between to-day and to-morrow; and if I do, and it is true, I shall have to change my creed. And I would rather change my creed by taking from it something which I find is not true than keep it when I know it is not. The only alternative to this is to stop learning or else lie about it and play the hypocrite.

This is what it means on the intellectual side.

Now what does it mean on the cult side, the ceremonial side? And here let us note one fact that is instructive. There have been periods in the past, and we have not outgrown them yet, except in certain parts of the world, when the creed or the cult, either the one or the other, was regarded as more important than anything else. You go back to ancient Rome, for example, and witness some religious ceremony, and you will find out it has never entered into the heads of the people that the gods cared anything about a man's character or conduct. A man by being religious does not profess even to tell the truth, or to be kind and faithful in his family, or to be honest with his neighbors. The gods cared nothing about that. The gods were not very good people themselves. All that they wanted was that the sacrifice should be brought and the rituals be gone

through with the right external ceremony. Scrupulously attended to in this respect, they asked no questions about character and conduct, they cared nothing about your belief; you could believe whatever you liked, so long as the sacrifices were brought.

Then you find other religions where the creed side is everything. If you believe, no careful inquisition is made as to your conduct; you can live about as you please if you are not disobedient to your creed; the cult is not so important, the ritual, the ceremonial. The one chief thing dwelt on is the belief, soundness of doctrine.

But, friends, these are changing, as I said. As the world gets more civilized we are getting finer, broader, truer ideas about the universe, about God, about human nature, about our relation to God. And the cult, the ceremony, what are these, what are they coming to? There is no reason why we as Unitarians should not have all the stately ritual of the most elaborately conducted service on the face of the earth, if we want it. The only important thing is that the ceremony shall be living, that it shall adequately express the thought and feeling. But as the thought and the feeling change, of course the ceremony changes, if people are careful about these things and do not keep on going through what become mere mummeries because the life has gone out of them.

These are the processes, friends, that have been going on,— perfectly simple, perfectly natural; inevitable, if humanity is to grow any.

But let us now raise the question most important of all. In the midst of this process is that which is most vital to religion decaying any? Is there any period in the history of the past when people cared more for truth than they do

to-day? Is there any period in the history of the past when there was more widely spread in the hearts of the people a sense of justice and a demand for it? Was there ever a time when there was a broader spirit of charity, of humanity, when people cared more for the condition of the inhabitants of other lands? for righteousness between nation and nation? when they cared more for the slave, for the downtrodden, for those who were suffering any form of evil?

Matthew Arnold has said somewhere that "conduct is at least three-fourths of life." Was there ever a time in the history of the world when there was a higher standard of conduct, when people cared more for personal righteousness? Have we lost any of the reverences, any of the tendernesses, any of the sentiments out of religion?

You misread the past, friends, if you think so for one passing moment.

Emerson has concentrated the beautiful truth into two lines as clear as crystal when he says,—

> "One accent of the Holy Ghost
> The heedless world hath never lost."

There never was a time when men cared so much for these things which are the essence and the soul of religion, these things that sweeten the world and make human life divine. It shows only a superficial thought, it shows an ignorant misreading of facts, when anybody supposes that there ever was a time in the history of the world which was more religious than to-day.

Take up any phase you please of human life and I will prove to you, beyond the possibility of question, that the world is unspeakably better to-day than it ever was before. Does this mean the decay of religion? Religion has over-

run the churches, it has got beyond the limits of the creeds, it is outside of all ceremonial forms; religion is taking possession of the sense of justice between man and man.

Why, friends, go back five hundred years ago. Did other nations then presume to raise a question as to whether any particular nation had a right to engage in any particular war? They would have been laughed at for the thought! But to-day not a civilized nation on the face of the earth dares to go to war in defiance of the moral sentiment of other civilized peoples. They have got to claim, and try to make out their case, that it is a matter of justice and right, something that has to be done. And so in any department of human life that you choose to investigate you will find a similar thing to be true.

Religion is more than creed, it is more than ceremony; it is coming to be life, righteousness, truth, justice, love, human helpfulness, service; all these things that brighten and glorify this struggling and rising humanity of ours.

Now one point more I must ask your attention to before we are done.

Every little while along the line of this progress that I have been speaking of, as natural and inevitable, you find the remains of old-time tragedies,— the prophets persecuted, saviours slain, reformers burned. Why is it? As Jesus said to the people of his time: You admit that the fathers were wrong; the fathers burned the prophets, and you build their sepulchres. That is what the world has been doing from the beginning. Oh, the pity of it! Out of what sort of curious, cruel misconception of things does it spring?

Go back and trace the men who have been martyrs to a new truth, from the far-off prophets in the dim ages of the past down to men like William Lloyd Garrison, dragged by

a mob of the best citizens through the streets of our modern Athens. What did it mean when in ancient Athens, Anaxagoras, one of the finest figures of his age, is condemned to death because he declared that the sun was a burning ball of fire? His sentence is commuted at the request of Pericles to banishment for life. What is it for? He had insulted their religion; because their religion had been saying all the time that the sun was Apollo, the sun-god, driving a chariot across the pathway of the heavens; and it was impious and atheistic to say it was a ball of fire.

But you will find at every single stage of the world's advance somebody has discovered a new, deeper, higher truth, and he is crucified for it. Why? Because, just as I said in an earlier part of my discourse, every religion that ever existed has started the absolutely baseless, unwarrantable assumption that it was infallible; that it had all the truth that God was ever going to give the world; and that, therefore, if you dared to find out a new truth you were insulting God and injuring humanity. I say there has not been a religion, from the miserable, ignorant fetish worships at the beginning clear up to the great churches of to-day, that has not made, and does not still make, this unwarrantable claim. And I say again — and I defy contradiction on the part of the scholarship of the world — that there is absolutely no authority in heaven or earth for doing anything of the sort. There is no authority for it in this Bible; there is no authority that will bear the light in the history of any church; it is simply a pure, unwarrantable assumption.

"I," — and the gigantic conceit of it! — "I am the depositary of God's eternal truth, and all there is of it that he is ever going to give the world; if you want a little fragment

of it come to me. If you dare to doubt, then the curse, clear to the eternal hell, shall be upon you. If you dare to find out something that does not agree with this truth, why, then, so much the worse for your new discovery."

The Church has put itself on record almost from the beginning,—I refer now to the organized "authorities" that have claimed to represent the Church and speak for it, —as opposed to almost every new discovery for the last two thousand years; and every single time they have been wrong. I should think they would get tired of it after a while. They assume that they are infallible; that they have all God's truth. And there is no bitter hatred quite like that of the man who thinks he speaks for God and whose infallibility is questioned.

And so you will find that the men who have discovered some new truth have inevitably and always been persecuted and cast out, until by and by the world has found itself compelled to accept it and has gathered itself up again and gone forward as best it could.

The time will come, I hope, when people will learn that this is an infinite universe, and that any theories which they can frame are only partial, and that a new truth that is vouchsafed to men is as sacred as any old truth. There is no new truth except as related to our discovery. I find out something new to-day which I did not know yesterday. It has been true from the beginning, as true as it is now, only I have not found it out, that is all. There is no new truth, there is no old truth, except as related to the period of our discovery.

The time will come, I hope, when the world will learn this; and then, instead of these cataclysms, upheavals, persecutions, there will be a recognized and assented-to grad-

ual advance, the world growing wiser, sweeter, and better day by day. Then the man who has discovered a new truth will not be branded as an infidel.

The only infidel in the world is the man who is faithless to God's truth. A man who has discovered a new truth which does not agree with beliefs, ideas, that have been established in the past is not an infidel. It is the man who refuses to accept the new truth that is the infidel; for he is false to God's last spoken word.

The time will come, then, when the world will evenly and broadly advance step by step, when the day of God will come as comes one of our natural days,— first a streak of light in the east, expanding, flooding the heavens, catching with glory the tops of the highest mountain, then running down their sides over the plains, until the gorges and the deepest valleys of the earth are full of light.

# WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?

It happens somewhat curiously — though of course in laying out the present series of sermons it was as far as possible from my mind — that my theme chimes in with a great controversy which is at present disturbing the churches and the newspapers of this city and Brooklyn.

The Rev. Lyman Abbott, D.D., minister of Plymouth Church, in Brooklyn, has been giving some sermons in which he has been dealing with questions of Revelation, The Bible, The Higher Criticism. He has raised a storm of protest on the part of many of his brother ministers and on the part of some of the newspapers of the time. The *Sun*, for example, had, the other morning, a long, clear, strong editorial discussing the problem as to whether Mr. Abbott himself was a Christian; and it decided that instead of being a Christian he is an infidel.

From the old point of view, from the hard and fast orthodoxy of the creeds, the judgment is an accurate one. If it be necessary to believe in the infallibility of the Bible, the infallibility of the old creeds — the Westminster Confession and others — in order to be a Christian, then Dr. Abbott is an infidel. The decision of the *Sun* is perfectly logical if you grant the premises.

Others are rejoicing in the work which Dr. Abbott is doing, and are taking the ground that it is not at all necessary to believe these things in order to be a Christian.

I say then, that, curiously enough, my theme this morning falls into the midst of this disputatious time. And to-day, in a good many other pulpits of Brooklyn and New York, substantially this theme will be discussed.

It ought, then, to be not only of interest, but of a good deal of practical importance, for us to settle, if we can, what are the essential things in Christianity.

If one were to judge by the claims of ministers, of ecclesiastical associations, denominational newspapers and reviews, if one were to judge from the creeds, he would suppose that Christianity came suddenly and full-grown into the world, that it leaped from the thought of God as Minerva was fabled to have leaped, fully developed and in complete armor, from the forehead of Jupiter.

You would suppose that, in the time of Jesus and his Apostles, the creed, the ceremony, the practice, the entire Christian system, was developed. You would suppose that it had been recognized that the world was in a special condition of loss, and that this plan of salvation, definitely and fully outlined, was suddenly revealed to men. And yet we are face to face with a curious fact if that be true.

The Church of Rome claims to be the only and original Church, and regards the Greek Church and all Protestants as so absolutely astray as to have no right to the name of Christian. The Greek Church regards the Church of Rome and all Protestants as in a similar hopeless condition. While all the Protestant churches regard the Church of Rome and the Greek Church as departures from the primitive simplicity of Christianity and as being mixed up with, and overloaded by, forms and ceremonies and doctrines which have been borrowed from pagan sources.

If there was a clear, a consistent, a definite revelation of

those things that are essential to Christianity at the very outset, is not this confusion and contradiction a little strange and hard to understand?

Let us inquire, then, this morning for a little as to what are the facts, the historic facts, the facts which are not questioned by anybody who is simply looking to find what is true.

We shall discover, then, that Christianity is in line with evolution, is an illustration of evolution. Instead of its coming into the world fully developed, full-grown, we shall recognize the fact that a seed was planted and that it grew year after year, century after century, gathering material on every hand from pagan and Christian sources, and that, instead of its having reached a fixed and final form during the first century or the fifth or the tenth or the eighteenth, it has never reached a fixed and final form, never will reach it, never can reach it, in the nature of things. For everything in this universe is undergoing either one of two processes: it is growing or it is decaying; and in either case it is not standing still, it is changing.

In spite, however, of these obvious facts and principles, you will find the most extravagant claims made in certain directions.

For example, the Roman Catholic Church says that it believes that which has always been believed by all men everywhere. So it claims to be catholic, or general, or universal in its belief. All Protestants make a similar claim, so far as the completeness and finality of revelation are concerned. The Rev. Dr. Richard S. Storrs, the famous Congregationalist preacher of Brooklyn, is reported to have said not many years ago that the idea of progress in theology was absurd,— meaning, of course, that since, as

he believes, it had been completely and finally revealed once for all, there could be no growth or change in it.

But let us now look for a little, glancing along the line of historic advance and see what we really discover; and then at the end we will try to see, if we may, what are the essential things in Christianity.

And first, I wish you to note the growth of belief concerning the nature and the authority of Jesus himself.

"The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." This, of course, was a good many years after the death of Jesus. It was applied to them, undoubtedly, as a nickname, a name of opprobrium, contempt. A great many of the grandest names of the world have been gained in a similar way, so that we need not be ashamed of it on that account. But what did it mean? What was a Christian, for example, in the time of Paul?

And here let me suggest to you, if you wish to read the New Testament in its order, so as to get the growth of thought, read Paul's epistles first, beginning with Galatians. For these were the first parts of the New Testament and were written years and years before either of the Gospels came into its present shape.

Now what was a Christian during the time that Paul was writing these epistles? Only one single thing was necessary to convert a Jew into a Christian. The Jew believed that a Messiah was to come; the Christian believed that the Messiah the Jews had been looking for had come and that Jesus was he.

That is all that constituted a Christian during the first century, and you will find that it is the burden of Paul's preaching. He went up and down the world proclaiming — what? Even if you have a superficial knowledge of the

writings of the New Testament you will recognize the echo of this verse. The one thing that Paul drove home by argument and appeal to the understanding, the consciences, the hearts, of his hearers was that "this Jesus" who had been crucified "was the Christ,"—and "Christ," you know, is only the Greek Christos, the Greek translation of the Hebrew word Messiah.

Paul preached, then, that Jesus was the Messiah; and accepting this was what constituted a Christian. But the process of development in regard to the Christian thought about Jesus had only then begun.

And let me ask you to remember, if you think it strange that such a process should have gone on,—remember that Christianity was born in the midst of a time and conditions when it was the commonest thing in the world to deify men. Greek and Roman hero after hero had been deified by the popular imagination and lifted up into the heavens. There was no god in all the Roman Empire so widely worshipped during the reign of Augustus, and for a hundred or two years after his time, as was the Emperor Augustus himself. His image, his shrine, lined all the roads and highways and was found in the peasants' cottages throughout the Roman Empire.

So that it was not a strange thing among the Greeks and among the Romans that this process of deifying should take place. It was, or would have been, a very strange thing among the Jews. They held such a spiritual conception of God, and regarded him as withdrawn by nature and distance so far from his world that it would have seemed to them nothing short of outright blasphemy to compare with him any creature born of woman. So that this doctrine never could have sprung up among the Jews. And as you

know, it never found any lodgment among the Jews; the Jews never became Christians.

It grew up among the Greeks and the Romans, where, as I have said to you, this process was one of the commonplaces of the time. But it was not in the first century. First was the thought that he was the Messiah. The next step was the belief that he was the second Adam. You will find Paul teaching this. The first Adam was the head of this fallen humanity of ours. Christ, Paul believed, was divinely appointed to be the head of a new and spiritual order of humanity that was to supersede the old and carnal order of the past.

Then, after that, came another step. Jesus came to be regarded as a pre-existent being, the Lord or Master from heaven, the first-born of every creature,— but, remember, creature still, infinitely removed from the divine source of all.

Then at last the final step was taken, and Jesus was elevated to the position of sharing with the Father his own divine nature. But how long did it take for this process to culminate?

As you look back down the ages, facts and movements get massed together in such a way that you do not notice how far they are apart. Just as, for example, if you are standing looking along lengthwise of a row of trees, those trees might be half a mile apart, but they would look to you as if they were close together; so, as you look down the ages towards the beginning of things, events seem to crowd each other, though there were centuries between.

So, as a matter of fact, it was more than three hundred years before the belief in the deity of Jesus became a test of orthodoxy.

If it became necessary then to believe in the deity of

Jesus in order to be a Christian, in order to be saved, then there were no Christians in the world for three hundred years, and none of the church members of all that time had any chance of being saved. For the doctrine of the deity of Jesus was not promulgated as an orthodox doctrine until the year 325 at the Council of Nice, at the time that the Nicene Creed was formed.

And how was the decision reached at that time? We ought to know some of these primary facts. Was it reached because the people had any new evidence on the subject that they did not have while Jesus was walking in the fields of Galilee? Was it reached because the people were wiser? Was it built out of evidence?

Nothing of the kind. It was simply the result of philosophical speculation; it was the attempt to bridge over an imaginary gulf supposed to exist between God and his world. And the bishops fought over it not in a very Christian temper. There never was a bitterer factional fight in Tammany Hall than that which finally decided the doctrines of the Nicene Creed. And they were not decided until the Emperor Constantine threw in the weight of his imperial decision against Arius and in favor of Athanasius.

And why did he do it? Did Constantine know anything about it? Was he an example of Christian piety? He was one of the most treacherous, murderous emperors that ever lived. He cared nothing for the principles involved one way or the other; it was simply a matter of governmental policy with him.

Thus the Nicene Creed was born, born after the struggle of three hundred years and more.

Now as to the other two great creeds of Christendom, let me say a word or two concerning them.

The chancellor of the University of New York, two or three weeks ago, published in one of our great Sunday newspapers the statement that the Apostles' Creed was written eighteen hundred years ago. I do not know whether the chancellor was napping at the time he wrote it. I cannot think that he was ignorant. I cannot think that he would purposely take advantage of the supposed ignorance of his readers. You would suppose, to hear people talk,— there are twelve clauses in the Apostles' Creed,— that the Apostles stood up in a row and one of them recited one clause and another another until they finished the Creed, and that so it dates back to their time.

As a matter of fact, the Apostles' Creed was never heard of for five hundred years after the birth of Jesus. Nobody knows who wrote it or whether there is any authority connected with it or not. We know that the people of that time were very ignorant about this world, and I for one do not know why I should suppose they knew everything about the other. It is a purely anonymous production, of absolutely no authority whatsoever.

If, however, let me say, it be necessary in order to be a Christian that one should accept the Apostles' Creed, then what becomes of the people who lived after the birth of Christ for five hundred years before there was any Apostles' Creed?

Now for the other great Christian symbol, as it is called, — the Athanasian Creed. And let me remind you here, friends,— for it is a matter of a good deal of importance,— that the doctrine of the Trinity is not fully developed in either the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed. It does not come to its last explicit statement until the promulgation of the Athanasian Creed.

I do not know why it should be called the Athanasian Creed. Athanasius lived in the fourth century and was the great adversary of Arius in the struggle out of which came the Nicene Creed. Yet this creed is named for him. As I say, I do not know why — unless it is supposed that it represents what Athanasius would have believed if he had lived at the time the creed was formed.

This Athanasian Creed has been dropped out of the Prayer Book of the American churches, but it is still binding on every Anglican and must be subscribed to by all the clergy of the Anglican Church. It is very long, metaphysical, and goes into a particular definition of the Trinity. But when was it promulgated?

Not until the ninth century. More than eight hundred years had gone by in the history of the church before the Athanasian Creed appeared. And this creed has attached to it what is called the "damnatory clause," very famous in theological discussion.

What is that clause? It declares that unless a man believe every part of this Athanasian Creed, he shall no doubt perish everlastingly.

Again let me ask, if it be absolutely necessary to believe the Athanasian Creed in order to be a Christian; if it be necessary to believe it in order to be saved, what becomes of not only the world for several hundreds of thousands of years, but what becomes of the first eight hundred years of the Christian Church before the Athanasian Creed was heard of?

Such strange claims and such strange alternatives!

Now I want to ask you to note a few facts concerning the real teaching of Jesus and his Apostles.

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Jesus never said anything about the fall of man, or Adam, or Eve, or the serpent, or anything of the kind,—apparently knows nothing about them. He says nothing about the doctrine of the atonement; he says nothing about the Trinity.

There is hardly anything which according to these popular creeds is essential to Christianity which Jesus anywhere touches or appears to care about in any way whatever.

There has been then, I say, this progress, this growth, from generation to generation and from century to century, of what has come to be called Christian belief. And that belief has never been absolutely fixed concerning any one of these great doctrines.

If I had time this morning to enter into a discussion of the doctrine of the atonement, I could show you that concerning it a similar thing is true.

For the first thousand years of Christian history the Church Universal believed in some form that the sufferings and death of Jesus were a price paid to the devil for the redemption of mankind. That is, they believed that by right of conquest Satan had come to be the ruler of mankind, the king of this world. And God agreed with the devil to let him have, to torture and put to death, his old adversary, the leader of the angels before he was cast out, as the price of the redemption of men. This was the doctrine for a thousand years. God is represented as having cheated or outwitted the devil. The devil supposed he was going to keep Christ forever. He did not know there was anything divine about his nature; and so, even after he had entered into the bargain, he lost the price on which he had agreed.

I am not caricaturing the doctrine: I am simply stating what was written about and preached for a thousand years.

And this doctrine of the atonement has passed through ten or fifteen or twenty transformations since that day.

So in regard to any one of the great doctrines. Instead of there having been an original and clear and defined revelation of divine truth at the first, held throughout the Church the entire length of its history, there has been change from age to age; and there is nothing that all those who wish to call themselves Christians are agreed upon to-day as to what is essential to Christianity. Still the Greek Church and the Roman Church and the Protestant churches are pitted against each other, and the different denominations of the Protestant churches against themselves, and all of them against us poor liberals, who claim the right to be free and accept the results of modern study and investigation.

Now, let us raise the question from the point of view of the modern world as to what is essential in Christianity.

The ceremonies, are they? The cult? Do you know, friends, there is nothing original in the cult? Almost every single one of the ceremonies in the Church are pagan in origin and hundreds of years older than Christianity. For example, the eucharist, holy water, baptism,—all this ceremonial can be traced to Egypt and other parts of the pagan world long before Christianity was heard of.

Is it the doctrines? We have already seen that there is no consensus of opinion in regard to the acceptance of the doctrines. But hardly a single one of the doctrines is original with Christianity.

You find the Trinity in Egypt, in India, all over the antique world. You find the virgin-birth in almost every one of the great pagan religions. A dozen, twenty, twenty-five heroes and demigods have been virgin-born. Almost every one of these doctrines can be paralleled in the history of Buddhism.

There is, to-day, in one of the churches in Europe a statue of Isis and Horus, the virgin mother and her child, from ancient Egypt, rechristened, and doing duty for Mary and Jesus.

So little, then, are these doctrines original.

What is it, then, that Christianity brought to the world, which we cling to with passionate love to-day and are not willing to let go?

The great contribution to the world which Christianity has made, which is original, which is unique, which is precious to every loving and tender heart, is the ideal of the life, the character, the spirit, the teaching of the Nazarene; Jesus, his spiritual attitude, his love, his human sympathy, his tenderness, his sacrifice, his willingness to help.

These are the essential things in Christianity, and these alone.

The doctrines as they have been held in the past are all of them destined to pass away. The thing that we cling to in this modern world and are going to cling to more and more is simply the ascertained truth of the universe as fast and far as it can be discovered. This is to be the external form and framework of things here, is the material out of which we are to construct our theological theories,—for theological theories we shall construct in the future as men have constructed them in the past.

But the one thing that grows brighter, and fairer, and sweeter, age after age, is this,—the Christ ideal, that luminous, leading star of human hope and of divine helpfulness. There is nothing to match it in any other religion, nothing so sweet, nothing so fair, nothing so tender.

The spiritual attitude of Jesus seems to me simply perfect. I cannot understand how in any age in the future it

can be outgrown. I am not referring to the limited thought of Jesus,— Jesus shared with his age many of the intellectual theories which the world has already outgrown,— I am referring now to his spiritual attitude. Was there ever anything diviner in the history of man than that simple, childlike, perfect trust in the Father? Trust for every day, trust for every night; a trust when he was hungry, a trust when he was lonely and sorrowful; a trust when the great hopes of his life had been dashed and seemed to be passing away.

I think there is nothing so sublime in the history of all the past as that figure of Jesus on the cross that Friday afternoon outside the walls of the city, surrounded by the Roman soldiers and the mob,— he, the gentle teacher, he who loved his friends, and who so loved his enemies that, as he was swooning into death, he said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." Hanging there with all of his hopes an apparent failure, wondering whether God himself had not forgotten and let go his hand, and yet with a trust that still clung in the darkness and the weakness, so that he fainted through death into immortal triumph. The victory over the thought, the love, the reverence, the worship of mankind, such as has never been won by any other historic figure in all the world! This perfect trust in the Father!

I know of nothing finer than this spiritual attitude of Jesus.

And then that other side of his nature, his relation towards his fellow-men. A service unstinted! Nothing grander was ever said about any man that ever lived than was said about Jesus: "he made himself of no reputation"; he cared nothing for fame or human greatness; "he went about doing good"; he sacrificed time, strength, love, gave

himself utterly that he might help one of the least of these his brethren.

I say, then, that the Christianity of the future is to be made up of these two elements: all truth for the theological side, however gained and through whatever source; then the spiritual attitude towards God and towards man of Jesus.

Now if the churches, friends, can ever prove that these two are not Christian, then it will be the saddest day that Christianity has ever seen. For they will have proved that there is something in the world that is better than Christianity. For there can be nothing finer than this: — truth for the thought side; the spirit and temper of Jesus for the feeling, the aspiration side.

There can be nothing finer than that, nobler than a combination like that.

Now let us at the end, just one moment, notice the one solemn utterance of Jesus on this subject. If he be correctly reported in the lesson which I read this morning,* he is setting forth for all time what in his judgment are the conditions of entrance into heaven. Here is this solemn scene of judgment, the sheep on his right hand, the goats on his left. He sends one of them into outer darkness, and the other into eternal felicity.

I am not discussing the question of future punishment now; I simply wish you to fix your attention on the conditions of admission to heaven as Jesus sets them forth.

Now, when he speaks to these on his right hand, that he calls the blessed of his Father and who are to inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, what does he say?

* The last part of the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew.

Does he catechise them as to what they believed? Not one single syllable of belief in any doctrine whatsoever. Nothing about foreordination; nothing about the Bible; nothing about the Trinity; nothing about his own character or authority. Simply as to whether they have been good. Good, that is all. Have they helped, have they tried to lessen the sum of human misery? Have they cared for their fellow-man? Not a word about ceremony, about membership in a church; not a word about any priesthood; not one single thing that all the churches to-day are declaring to be absolutely essential to Christian character and Christian life,— not one word about any of them!

Those who have tried to be good and help their fellowmen are the ones before whose feet the door of eternal felicity opens with welcome. And the others are condemned, not for lack of belief, but simply for lack of character and conduct, nothing else.

Now, then, let me say here as my final word, according to the standards of the popular churches to-day, not a single one of the Apostles was a Christian, and Jesus was not a Christian; and if Jesus should come here to New York in this year 1897, and should go before a board of examiners, petitioning for admission into any one of the churches, there is not a single one that could take him in, provided they asked of him the same questions which they ask other candidates.

And, though they all say that we Unitarians are not Christians, I verily believe that if Jesus were here he would find himself at home in the midst of our simple service that teaches just what he taught,— the love of God and the service of man as the great essentials of all true religion.

# GOD AS INSIDE THE UNIVERSE, NOT OUTSIDE.

GOD is spirit. Before coming to consider the problem of belief in God as it faces us to-day, I wish to indicate to you some of the steps of thought that humanity has naturally, inevitably taken.

When I was a boy I was brought up to believe that men originally knew the true and only God, and that they wilfully and wickedly departed from him and took up the worship of strange deities, of idols.

Milton, you will remember, teaches in his "Paradise Lost" that all the other religions outside of Christianity are inventions of the fallen angels; that they thus did what they could to divert mankind from paying the worship to God which they owed to him, and induced them, under these false pretences, to pay that worship to themselves. And yet we know very well to-day that polytheism, the worship of many gods, was one of the most natural steps in thinking, in living, that mankind could take. We know, indeed, that in a certain stage of human development it is simply inevitable. Polytheism represents one phase of the belief of these far-away childlike men. Awaking to consciousness, they are able to say, "I am I," to recognize their own individuality; and then they begin to look around them, in their crude and ignorant way to ask questions, and as best they can to answer those questions. They

neither have nor can have any conception of the unity of things.

Why should we expect man two or three hundred thousand years ago, or even ten thousand years ago, to know concerning this universe what we have only discovered and demonstrated during our own lifetime? As they then looked abroad, it was inevitable that they should suppose that the universe or the world, as they saw it and felt it, was the manifestation, not of one power, but of many powers,—powers irreconcilable with each other; powers which conflicted; powers good on the one hand, evil on the other.

Why should we expect them to understand that the same being that made light made darkness also, which seemed to them its antithesis?

Why should we expect them to trace heat and cold to the same source?

Why should we suppose that they would be able to worship the sun as the source and giver of life, and at the same time to recognize that it was this power that brought devastation and destruction? As then they looked over the face of things it was inevitable that they should suppose that there were many powers at work in the world and outside of it.

And note another thing. Men in all ages have naturally personified these forces. Naturally, did I say? Inevitably. Men have never been able to conceive power except as will-power. We cannot understand it any other way to-day. Down to the time of Kepler, the famous astronomer who discovered the laws of planetary motion, even he was able to understand the orderly movements of these planets only by supposing that an angel divinely appointed to that mission resided in and guided each one of them.

And our immediate ancestors here in the New World attributed blight and frost and storm and lightning and pestilence and all sorts of evil things to the agency of one evil spirit or a million. It did not occur to them to trace them all to the one divine hand and source.

I say, then, that polytheism was an inevitable step in the growth of the human mind.

And, though translators have disguised it for us, polytheism is in the very first words of the Bible. The Hebrews were not monotheists from the time of Abraham down: they began as polytheists and nature worshippers, the same as all other people. The first words of the Bible, if they were correctly translated, would read, "In the beginning the strong ones (plural) created the heavens and the earth." The word is a plural word, the same word which in the Psalms is translated in one case "angels."

The Hebrews, then, at the outset were polytheists like their neighbors. They passed over the road that every part of humanity has been obliged to traverse; and to-day there are very few people on the face of the earth who are not polytheistic still. I will touch on that a little more at length when I have taken my second step.

After polytheism comes what Max Müller calls henotheism,— a condition of mind in which people, while they believe in the real existence of many gods, believe that they owe allegiance to one, and that it is wrong for them to worship any other. Precisely the state of mind of people who recognize the existence of the President of France, the Kaiser of Germany, the Czar of all the Russias, and a hundred other rulers over the face of the earth, but consider themselves in loyalty bound to only their own ruler.

The Hebrews, through a large part of their history, were

not monotheists; they were henotheists. But they believed that Jehovah was their God and that they had no right to worship any other. Traces of this are perfectly plain to any one who reads the Old Testament intelligently, from the beginning almost to the end.

The next step is the attainment of monotheism,— the belief not only in loyalty and allegiance to one God, but that there is only one God, the father of all men and the ruler of all the earth.

I said a moment ago that very few people have attained that stage of thinking even yet. I suppose not one-third of the people on the face of the earth are in any proper sense monotheists even to-day. Throughout almost the entire history of Christendom itself the people have not been, in any proper sense of the word, monotheists in their worship.

Even if you omit the claim that might reasonably be made that the God of the Christians has been a man, the greater part of Christendom has not even worshipped this man exclusively or commonly, but has worshipped a woman,— Mary. The man had become so highly exalted, so far removed from their needs and their sympathies, that their minds naturally turned to the mother, Mary, in the expectation that she would plead with her son and so gain for them, through him, the divine favor.

Then, too, they have worshipped in all ages, saints, patron saints, just as the Greek and Romans worshipped their tutelar deities. So that Christendom has not, in the strict sense of the word, been monotheistic.

But, not to dwell on this step which the world has taken in its way up to the lofty height of monotheism, let us face the difficulty which fronts men, thoughtful men and women,

to-day. We care very little, except as a matter of history, for all these old-time theories of polytheism or henotheism or monotheism.

The great thing that faces the earnest men of the world now is the question as to whether they can believe in God at all. He seems lost in the infinite spaces of the limitless universe. Where is he? How shall we come to his seat? Can we speak to him, and will he answer? Can we cry with the thought that he will hear? Does he exist? Or shall we accept the dictum of some scientists who tell us that all there is is Nature or Force, and that we puny creatures stand here watching the play of mighty, irresponsible, unmoral, careless, if not cruel, forces. May we believe in God at all?

My friends, I wish you to note one thing this morning: I speak to you as though you were all these questioning scientists.

I do not propose for the next fifteen minutes to assume anything. I propose to keep myself on the solid ground of absolutely demonstrated fact, and ask you to see where we are.

As we wake up, then, to self-consciousness we recognize the fact not only that we exist, but that there is what Matthew Arnold calls a "Power not ourselves,"— a Power outside of us, separated from us, over which we have no control.

Let us consider this Power now for a little while. You may call it Force, you may call it Nature, you may speak of it as Law, you may call it the Universe, you may say it is It, and not He; I care not. Use any term you please. This Power has produced you and me. We are its children. As one outcome of this Power here exists life,— foot and hand

not only, but brain; the brain of a Shakspere that dreams Hamlet, the brain of a Goethe that dreams Faust, the brain of a Jesus that dreams Our Father, the brain of an engineer that dreams the Brooklyn Bridge, the brain that has dreamed a train of cars, the brain that has dreamed a steamship that ploughs the waves and brushes them one side as though they were playthings. All this, and all that these things merely suggest,— countless wonders and marvels,— are the products of this Power that is not ourselves.

Now note; this Power is eternal. I want to see how many of the attributes that are ordinarily attributed to God we are rationally justified in attributing to this Power. This Power is eternal. We can conceive no beginning, we can dream no end. It was here before we were born; it will be here when we have passed away. It is that which has made us, and not we ourselves. It is eternal, then.

Note another thing. It is infinite, boundless in its reach. Can you think any limit to the universe? Let me give you one or two poor hints by which you may climb up into the beginning of a conception of what it all means.

Suppose we were able to start to-day on a train of cars that should go at the rate of sixty miles an hour for twenty-four hours in the day and three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, and so should start out on a journey to the sun. It would take us, travelling every day and every week and every month and every year, more than one hundred and seventy years on that train of cars to reach the sun.

Light travels it in about eight minutes and a half. But there are suns so far away that it has taken light twenty-five or thirty millions of years to reach us,— how many more we know not.

Suppose you try to think the limit of the worlds. Suppose

you could go to the edge, dream of an edge for a moment, and look over. There is space, infinite space, still beyond. Suppose you could build walls from the zenith to the nadir, fencing it in. Infinite reaches of space beyond all the walls.

This Being, then, is not only an eternal being, but it is an infinite being. It is not only eternal and infinite, this Being is almighty.

Let me give you here again one or two suggestions of power, for "almighty" means practically nothing to us. How can I suggest to you the power of gravity which holds our little moon in its place in relation to the earth? Conceive, if you will, a bar of steel a mile square. Lay it down beside the Catskills and it will dwarf their highest peaks. Stretch that bar of steel if you can from the earth to the moon. Would that represent the power that is needed to hold the moon in its place? It would take eighty-seven thousand bars of steel a mile square to match the power of gravity that keeps that little worn-out asteroid in its place. If you should take threads of steel a quarter of an inch in diameter you would need to cover the earth with them so that they would be no more than six inches apart in order to represent the force of gravity that holds the moon in its place in the sky. Then remember that the moon is a little out-worn planet, and this whole solar system of ours is only a little tiny flake of light on the borders of the blazing glory of the infinite.

Does it mean anything to you, then, to say that this Power is omnipotent which keeps all these planets in their places in all their orbits, singing their songs, and moving through the mazes of their tireless dance?

Not only is this Being eternal, almighty, and infinite; we know to-day that it is one; we have demonstrated that the

power which is at the heart of this universe is not a thousand, not a hundred, not three; we have demonstrated that it is one,— one law, one power.

We have found out now that the stuff which makes up the substance of the sun is precisely the same kind of stuff that we tread underneath our feet in walking over this little planet. We have found out now that the forces in the sun are the same forces that we are dealing with here every day.

Chemistry has reduced the infinite variety of the forms of matter to some sixty or seventy elements; and the philosophical chemists, those who can predict and forecast what is coming, are beginning to tell us that they shall undoubtedly be able, by and by, to reduce all these elements to one; and this element, this one, what is it? Matter? Do you know what matter means? Nobody ever saw an atom; it is even inconceivable. They are beginning to dream with some of the philosophical men of the time that they shall find this atom to be a little whirl of movement, a vortex-motion; — in what? An element of which we at present have no experience under any name that we can properly call matter. We know also that never since the universe came into being has there been one slightest particle of matter that has passed out of being, never one unit of force that has been lost.

Passing through infinite changes, they still are forever in existence, forever but modifications of the one eternal reality, which, as we have already seen, is eternal, not only, but infinite, almighty, and one.

Now let us take a step further, and note another significant fact. As we look out upon this apparent confusion and contradiction of forces and movements, we find that

the universe is everywhere intelligible. It is an intelligible order. What does that mean? It means, if inference ever means anything, that it is the expression, the manifestation of an intelligent Power. There is nothing anywhere that intelligence cannot trace and comprehend. So that the wisest and most devout men say, as did this same Kepler, to whom I referred a moment ago, in the time of his wonderful discovery, "O God, I think over again thy thoughts after thee." It is an intelligible order.

One other thing of most remarkable significance. There are signs everywhere of an intelligible progress, from the beginning, so far as we can trace it, until to-day: the universe manifests not only order, but orderly growth, orderly advance; until we can add to those great words of Tennyson, and say not only

"One law, one element,"

but

"One far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves."

What do we know then? We know that there is a Being not ourselves, capable of producing life, producing all that is. We know that it is an eternal being, an infinite being, an almighty being, one being, intelligent, who is leading the march of the worlds.

So much, friends, is demonstrated scientific truth. What next? Let me raise another question,— perhaps the most crucial one of all. Is this Being matter or spirit? Let us stop and think for a moment. On any theory you choose to hold, this Being has produced matter, not only, it has produced what we mean by spirit. I do not know what matter is. I do not know of any man on the face of the earth wise enough to tell me. I do know, however, that

life is, for I live; I know that feeling is, for I feel; I know that thought is, for I think; I know that love is, for I love; I know that hope is, for I hope; I know that aspiration is, for I aspire; I know that worship is, for I worship; I know the existence of what we mean by soul, because I am self-conscious.

What do we mean by matter? All that anybody knows about the existence of matter is purely an inference. I touch this desk. Do I know what is there? I only know there is something there that reports itself to my consciousness as hard and as of a certain shape; that is, it resists my touch. But do I know what it is out there? The sense of resistance which I interpret as meaning that there is something there at the end of my fingers — that sense is up here, in consciousness. I look at this book and say its cover is green or blue. What do I mean? I know that there is no such thing as color down there connected with that book. All I know is that the light, as it is reflected from that to my eye, starts a sensation in my nerves which up here in the brain is translated into what I call blue or green. It is here, not there. I look at those flowers; I smell their fragrance. What does it mean? It means again that something there starts a sensation in my nerves which up here in the brain is translated into color and fragrance. During the service this morning I heard what I call music upon the organ. Again, what does that mean? It means only that the touching of what we call the keys starts movements of the air which strike the drum of my ear, causing sensations in my nerves, which again up here in the brain are translated into what I call music.

The world lives in my brain, in my consciousness; and, though I do not doubt for one instant the reality of this

external world, I merely mean to impress upon you that I know directly the internal world, and know the other only as a matter of inference. I *know* spirit, soul, thought, feeling, love, hope; I *know* these. And if you attempt to tell me that they are produced merely by piles or aggregations of particles of dead matter, you are talking to me nonsense.

Huxley, Tyndall, the greatest thinkers that have ever lived, have said that there is no possible way of bridging the gulf between the motion of dead material particles and a feeling or thought. The gulf is impassable. It is simply impossible for me to think soul if I start with matter; but I can start with soul and think matter.

Mr. Herbert Spencer, in some conversation I had with him some years ago, said, what he has since published in his books, that this force which is manifested in the universe around us is precisely the same force which wells up in us under the form of consciousness. He said, also, that whatever we may be doubtful about, there is one thing that is more certain than any other conceivable item of knowledge, and that is the existence of this infinite and eternal Power of which all material and phenomenal movements are simply manifestations.

We can think matter, then, if we start with mind; but we cannot think mind if we start with matter. For what we mean by matter is only so much of the manifestation of this infinite power as is beyond the limits of our individual consciousness.

Now is this Being personal? Is he conscious? Do I believe in the personality and consciousness of God? Not in the sense in which we use those words of ourselves. What do we mean when we speak of our own personality?

We mean to refer to a being who was born, who is limited, enclosed in a body, and who will die.

God is not a person in that sense. But personality is one of the manifestations of this infinite Power. The Power, then, which has produced countless persons must be as much as person, must it not? That which is evolved must first have been involved. The stream does not rise higher than its source. We must suppose a cause adequate to all effects.

Is God conscious? He may not be conscious in the sense that I am, but my consciousness is a part of the manifestation of God, and he must be as much as conscious.

Herbert Spencer said again (and I beg you to note the profoundness of the thought), "This infinite and eternal Being may, for all I can see, be as much above and beyond what *we mean* by personality and consciousness as we are above and beyond vegetable growths."

The Infinite God, then, having produced personality and consciousness, if he be not personal and conscious in our sense of those terms, is something infinitely and unspeakably more, grander, higher, better than these.

And now, friends, I come to the question (for the clock warns me that I must leave many things one side) as to where this God is. Let me suggest to you, before I answer that, the wonder of some of these sentiments that haunt us and appeal to us, if we imagine ourselves in a purely material universe.

Byron says in one of his lines,—

"To me
High mountains are a feeling,"

and he speaks of the *presence* that he finds on the shore and in the wonder of the woods.

Did it ever occur to you that it is a little bit strange, if this universe is all material, that one lump of matter should ever think of such a thing as going down on its knees to another lump of matter, however big it might be? If it is simply matter, where do suggestions like that come from? Why do we feel the sensation of the sublime in the presence of mountains, or under the night sky of stars? What does Wordsworth mean when he says,—

> "And I have felt
> A Presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thought; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
> A motion and a spirit that impels
> All living things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."

Whence spring such sentiments, if all is only matter? And sentiment, remember, friends, is as real a thing as a bowlder, and demands to be accounted for quite as much.

Now for the question, Where is this God? Where is this Being that is eternal, infinite, almighty, one, personal, conscious, loving, our Father? Where is he? We have lost him, friends, because the universe has grown to us to be so great. We are much in the condition of the little child whose father should take him in his arms into the cathedral of St. Peter's, carrying him until his face was within two inches of one of the great pillars, and ask him

to look at St. Peter's. We have lost God not because he is so far away, but because he is so nigh. He is infinitely nearer to us than he used to be in the old theology that placed him above the dome of blue. It took at least a little time for us to get to him then. But where is he now? He is nearer to me than my pulse beat; he is nearer than the throb of my heart; he is nearer than the thought of my brain; he is nearer than the aspiration of my soul. For he is the power by which the pulse beats, heart throbs, brain thinks, and soul aspires.

I am his child, and it is his personal thrilling power in and through me that constitutes my life. I bend over a tiny blade of grass coming up through the ground in the spring, and note how it aspires to get up into the air and the light; and it is God present, pushing it up, and painting it. I look at the flower, I smell its fragrance: it is God unfolding the wonder of that flower. God is its beauty, God its odor. I look into the faces of my friends, or down deep into the eyes of my little child, and thrill with the thought that I have shared with God his creative power, and I see in these deeps the divineness of a soul that is a spark of the Infinite One looking back into mine.

Where is God? He is here, all here, and all at the farthest bound of space.

You think this is a strange statement? Let me give you a simple illustration that, perhaps, will help you to think its reasonableness.

Where am I? You think you see me. You do not. You never saw me. You never will see me. They used to talk about men as having souls. I do not believe any of us have souls. *I am* a soul. I *have* a body. You have never seen the most intimate friend you have on the face of

the earth, and you never will, any more than you see God every time you open your eyes.

What do you see? You see clothes, the exposed parts of the body. You look into the eyes, you hear the sounds of speech, but do you see, do you hear me? I am invisible as much as God is invisible. I am intangible as much as God is intangible. I am omnipresent throughout my body just as much as God is omnipresent throughout his universe. When I am writing I am all at the tips of my fingers, putting myself into expression; when I am speaking, I am at the tip of my tongue; when I am thinking, I am here in my brain; when I am walking, I am in my feet. I am at any point or part of the body which calls for me in order that it may execute its functions. I am omnipresent throughout my body; but can you locate me anywhere?

A French scientist, astronomer, thinking he was going to say a profound thing, once gave utterance to this saying: "I have swept the universe with my telescope, and I find no trace of God." Strange! Why should not an anatomist, with a body on the dissecting table, think he was saying a wise thing to give expression to this sentence, "I have examined this body from head to foot with my microscope, and I have not found a single thought?" Would you consider it a wise saying? I regard it as a very silly saying; but it is just as wise for the anatomist as it is for the astronomer. When you can see me with a microscope,— that is, the soul, the I, that thinks, feels, hopes, loves,— then hunt for God with a telescope!

God is the life, the thought, the soul of the universe, as I am the life, the thought, the soul of this body.

Where is God, then? So near to you that you lose him.

Let me read you, as giving expression to this thought, a couple of verses: —

"Oh, where is the sea?" the fishes cried,
As they swam the crystal clearness through.
"We've heard from of old of the ocean's tide,
And we long to look on the waters blue.
The wise ones speak of the infinite sea:
Oh, who can tell us if such there be?"

The lark flew up in the morning bright,
And sung and balanced on sunny wings;
And this was its song: "I see the light,
I look o'er a world of beautiful things;
But, flying and singing everywhere,
In vain I have searched to find the air."

We look for God as though we could see him with these external eyes, as though he were dwelling in a palace, like earth's petty kings, in some bright star in space; and God all the time folds us around in his arms, is closer to us than mother or father ever were. Every whisper of our hearts finds echo in his infinite sympathy, every pang of pain thrills him through. Every up-reach of the hand clasps his for leadership. He is nearer to us than the life we live or the sympathies we feel. God is he in whom we live and move and have our being.

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In the rest of the sermons of this series, then, I shall try to give you some of the results of this great thought that God, to clear-thinking people in the modern world, must be conceived of as inside his universe instead of outside. In all the old religions, in Christendom, almost from the beginning, God has been thought of as living away off some-

where in space, and arbitrarily ruling this world. God can no longer be intelligently thought of in that way. It is God inside the universe or nowhere, for there cannot be two infinites. We can no longer think of God as a great magnified unnatural man sitting on a throne. God is the heart, the life, the soul of things. And the laws of this universe, the forces of this universe, are only the manifestations of the personal order and power of Him who is all, and in all.

# RELIGION NATURAL, NOT STATUTORY.

As I look into your faces and consider my theme, I am troubled just a little over the question as to whether I shall be able to make it as clear, as tangible, as easily apprehensible as I wish. It is indeed one of the crucial subjects of my whole series of sermons, one of which I am specially anxious that you should note the complete significance. I shall try to make it luminous, easy to understand; but may I venture to beg of you to supplement any defects on my part by a careful and earnest attention?

I am to attempt to set forth two distinct, separate, opposed theories of religion; and, in doing so, I must also set forth two distinct and opposed theories of the universe,—for I had occasion to tell you, as some of you at any rate will remember, several Sundays ago, that every religion that the world has ever known has sprung out of a cosmology, a theory of things. Every religion is rooted in a scheme of the universe, and takes shape from it.

As you study the characteristics of all the old-time religions of the world, historic and dogmatic Christianity not excepted, you will find that they are characterized by certain peculiarities which they have in common, which set them apart in a class by themselves; and the declaration with which I begin this morning is that we have reached that time in the history of the world when all these conceptions are becoming antiquated. The old heaven and the old

earth are passed away; and I see a new heaven and a new earth, a new universe, a new thought about God, man, nature, destiny.

I wish, then, this morning, to set in contrast these two conceptions, if I may, helping you to understand the old, helping you to comprehend and be ready to welcome the new.

In all these old religions, Christianity, as I said, historic Christianity until this generation included, the world has been something separate and apart from God. This is the first point I wish to make clear.

God existed before there was any visible universe, according to this theory. Suddenly he determined to create the world. He did this as a mechanic, as a carpenter might make something outside of himself. He did it by fiat. He said, Let light be, and it was; Let the earth be, and suddenly it appeared; Let the stars appear to give light by night, and the sun to give light by day, and it was so.

He created this universe, then, as something entirely apart from himself, while he sat off somewhere in space and ruled this new kingdom like a king. That is, he ruled it from outside: he ruled it as the czar rules his empire.

Nature, natural forces, natural laws, were something apart from God. They indeed manifested God's glory, they indeed were the results of his skill; but they were something external to, outside of, himself.

Now, in the next place,—for I must not dwell on these points too long,—in the next place, in this world men and women are primarily God's subjects. He is king: they are people to be governed. They can rebel against him, as subjects can initiate a revolution.

And right in here, friends, is the significance of a very famous saying of Mr. Moody, a reference to which will

illustrate what I mean. Some years ago, discussing the relative importance of morality, or character, and religion, Mr. Moody said very tersely — and from his point of view with perfect consistency and truth — that morality did not touch the question of salvation. A man might be as moral as he would; but he was not, therefore, at all certain of getting to heaven. Note, I say, from this point of view, Mr. Moody was accurate and consistent.

To illustrate, suppose one of the czar's subjects is a Nihilist: he has broken the laws of the empire, and is a traitor. If he is allowed to go on, the empire itself may be in danger. Now suppose somebody comes to the czar, and pleads that this man's forfeited life be granted him on the ground that he is an honest man and pays his debts, that he is kind in his family, that he is good to his children, that he is a pleasant neighbor. Do you not see that this would have nothing whatever to do with the fact that he was a traitor and had forfeited his life? The czar might say his morality, let him be as moral as he will, does not touch the question of his relation to my empire and its safety, as a citizen.

I speak of this simply to illustrate the point that in the old theology man is a citizen of God's kingdom, to be ruled and governed as a king governs his realm.

Now, in the third place, God's commandments, according to this old theory, are purely arbitrary affairs. God issues any command he pleases, as a king issues any command he pleases to his subjects. There is no natural, no necessary reason why the command should be this rather than that: it is purely a matter of God's will.

Take as an illustration the command supposed to have been issued to Adam and Eve in the garden. Do you not

see that it was purely an arbitrary thing? God did not say that the fruit of this tree of life was unhealthy, would injure Adam and Eve if they ate it. There was no natural reason why they should not have eaten it, so far as the narrative goes. God simply told them they must not, making this an arbitrary test of their obedience to him; and he threatened an arbitrary punishment, if they disobeyed.

On the old theory of religion, then, this is the point I wish to make clear, and drop as soon as possible: God's commands are purely arbitrary; they do not exist in the nature of things. Men have no natural way of finding out what they are; and this is why in all the old religions the supposed commands of the gods are sent by angels, by special messengers, or else have to be written down in a book. There is no other way by which anybody should ever dream as to what God wants him to do. Natural knowledge, a perfect understanding of the constitution and laws of the universe, would be of no assistance whatever. So they have invented the idea of a supernatural revelation containing these supernatural and purely arbitrary commandments of God.

Now, in the next place, What about the credentials? If a messenger appears in some distant part of an empire with some command of the king, the people say, "But how do we know that this comes from the king?" There is nothing in the command itself that would help the people any to settle that question. So the messenger must bring his credentials.

And here, friends, is the origin of all the signs and wonders and miracles of the world. The messenger has revealed some sign, wrought some wonder, performed some

miracle, and astonished the people into believing that he had come with a word from the celestial court.

Do you not remember how the people came around Jesus, when he was here on earth, and said, "Give us a sign!" which he refused. "Give us a sign, so that we may know that you are a messenger of the Divine."

All the old religions of the world are full of these signs and wonders. This is, note, what I shall have to refer to by and by with an added emphasis.

People believe in the presence of God in these old religions, not on account of the beautiful, perfect, natural order of things, but because of disorder, because of interference of some sort, because suddenly the universe has ceased to work perfectly. And they take that as a signal that God is present.

I shall have occasion, a little later, as I said, to refer to this again.

In the next place, I wish you to notice that the rewards and punishments in all these old religions are just as arbitrary as are the commandments. In other words, if you did not know from some supernatural source, it would never occur to you to attach the particular penalty to any particular action.

Take the case of Job as an illustration. God commands Job to be true and faithful, and rewards him how,—for his goodness? After his long trial and his constancy he is rewarded for being good by having thousands of cattle and sheep given him, by being made honorable among his people, by having new children given him in the place of those that have been taken away.

All through the Old Testament you will find this idea. You find it also in the New. Recall to mind for a moment

the case where the disciples came to Jesus in the presence of the blind man, and said, "Master, who was it that sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

It never occurred to them that a man could be born blind except as the punishment for a sin. That is the old idea in all the old religions. The Bible is full of it from one end to the other. Disease, punishment, the blighting of the crops, the loss of a friend,— any calamity is a punishment for sin. Thousands of people to-day have no conception of any natural order or of results as necessarily following certain natural causes.

What does religion come to then, friends, all this being so? Religion is an external affair. It is the coming into the presence of God with set and ordered forms and ceremonies and praises, or it is the bringing of cattle or birds to be slain and burnt as offerings, or it is bringing oil or wine to be poured out as an oblation.

The thing I wish you to note is that it is something entirely apart from the natural, every-day life of the people. Religion is something extra, something over beyond good living.

We make that distinction still, very foolishly, very shallowly. A man is ever so good, he tells the truth, he loves his fellow-men, he is honest in business, he is frank and free in his attitude towards all truth, he is an ideal man; but you will find people superciliously looking upon a man like that, and piously regretting that he is not religious.

And here is a man who is anything but what he ought to be in his personal character and relations to his fellow-men. He may be very religious, indeed.

On this old theory religion is a matter, as I said, of praises, of offerings, of oblations, of ceremonies, of services.

And salvation, what is that? It is getting somewhere after death, and it is escaping another somewhere.

Do you think this is antique? The modern thought of Christendom is saturated with it. One of our New York newspapers within the last week has been sending around to ministers the question, as though it were a crucial one and touched something vital, as to whether a man who did not believe in the virgin birth could — what? Could go to heaven! Not whether he would be a good man, but whether he would find the gate shut in his face when he attempted to enter at the last day!

Salvation, then, I say, on all these antiquated theories of the universe and religion, is something external, arbitrary: it is escaping hell and getting into heaven.

Of course, incidentally, they tell you that you must be good; but the essence of it is not there.

Now, friends, I have not attempted to argue so far. I have tried to set forth as clearly as possible a theory of the universe, of religion. I wish it merely as a background for that which I believe with my whole soul. I wish that you may simply note it so clearly as to set it distinctly apart from the other, which now I shall outline as simply and clearly as I may.

In the new theory of the universe it is not speculation, but ascertained and demonstrated truth, that the universe is not external, apart from God.

This phenomenal manifestation that is all around us, that makes up the magnificent scene of heaven and earth,— the sun by day, the starry sky by night, all the multiplied worlds of space, this fair earth with its carpet of green or its cloak of snow, the ocean, rivers, the mountains, the meadows,— all this phenomenal universe is merely the flow-

ing garment of God, forever woven in the ringing loom of time,—a garment which, while it conceals him, at the same time is the only means by which God is revealed to his children. The universe is the visible mantle of the Divine.

It is not God's kingdom apart from himself that he arbitrarily rules. The laws, the forces, the life, the beauty, the glory of this universe are simply the present eternal activity of God.

Now note, in the second place, that men and women on this theory of religion are not so much God's subjects as they are his children. They are not to be arbitrarily governed and rewarded or punished forever according to what they do, as to whether they obey his arbitrary commands or not. They are his children, to be loved, to be punished it may be, but punished, not in anger, but in love, and for the sake of their reformation; to be trained, taught, educated, developed; to be unfolded into the likeness of the Divine.

This is the relation in which men and women stand to God in the new universe and in the new thought of the religious life.

And now note that God's commands, since he is related to the universe in this way, are inherent: they are natural, they are necessary, they are simply an expression of the laws of the universe.

This theory of things abolishes the distinction, which I believe to be totally unreal, between the natural and the supernatural. There is no supernatural, because all, from centre to circumference, is the natural expression of the life and the wisdom and the love and the thought of God. All is a part of this eternal constitution of things.

Do you not see, friends, then, that the old idea of God's will being sent to us by special messengers or written down

in a book is not disproved, but simply outgrown? No modern man attempts to prove that a miracle never happened. He simply finds himself in a universe where the whole thought of miracle is an impertinence, because there is no place for it in the midst of God's eternal order.

Messengers, preachers, or prophets, or whatever they may be, proclaim God's truth, utter God's law, just in so far as they are able to discern and express the eternal nature of things; and books, however holy, are transcripts of God's laws only in so far as they are correct copies of the eternal, natural, necessary right and wrong of the universe,—no more, no less.

Now what are the credentials of God's truth in this modern universe in accordance with this theory of things?

Friends, just stop and think for a moment. It is very easy for us to believe, because we have inherited it traditionally, that something might have happened two thousand years ago on the other side of the ocean that we should never think of believing if it should be reported as happening in the State of Connecticut yesterday.

The religious sphere, according to the old theory of things, is a sort of fairy country, "Jack and the Beanstalk" land, in which any conceivable thing might have happened; but we are never ready to believe that such things happen in any country that we have ever seen and known or of which we have had any experience.

Think for a moment what it means. People have talked for ages as if the ongoing of this magnificent procession of natural forces and glories was no sign of the presence of God at all; no God needed to keep the worlds in their perfect and glorious round; no God needed to make the sun rise to the fraction of a second every morning, tireless, age

after age; no God needed to account for the endless circle of the seasons, the resurrections of the spring; no God needed to paint the glory of the burning leaves and bushes of the autumn! But God apparently present when there is a disturbance, an interference, of this order!

Friends, do you know what it means? We read without a pulse beating even the tiniest bit faster about a barbarian general ordering the sun to stand still until he gets through slaughtering his enemies. We read without a tremor how the prophet pleases one of the kings by making the shadow on the sun-dial of Ahaz turn back fifteen degrees. Did you ever wake up to think that that means the earth stopping suddenly on its axis and going backward, and then starting on its forward movement again?

If the shadow on a dial to-day should go back by half a degree, all intelligent people of the world would stand aghast; and they would not take it as an indication of the presence and power of God. They would say, The Almighty has lost his grasp of things; and the wreck of the universe, the twilight of the gods, is upon us. It would appall mankind if the slightest miracle should ever occur.

Do you ever stop to think, friends, that it would mean that henceforth we could never know anything, if to-morrow morning we should wake up and find that water did not freeze at thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit, that gases in the laboratory behaved in a way that they were never known to have behaved before? We should say knowledge is henceforth at an end. For knowledge means that you can trust the universe, and know that the eternal wisdom and the eternal order can always be counted on.

In this modern universe of ours, and with this new and grander theory of religion, it is not interference that we look

to as a token of the presence of God. It is this eternal, matchless, glorious order, speaking to us of the tireless power, speaking to us of the flawless wisdom, speaking to us of the eternal love of Him who is at the heart of things.

Note as the next point, that in this new universe of ours there is no such thing as an arbitrary reward or an arbitrary punishment. Nobody is ever rewarded, nobody is ever punished, in the old sense of the words.

Instead of rewards and punishments, every rational man to-day recognizes simply results. If you obey the laws of the universe, such and such things will happen: if you disobey, such other and unpleasant things will happen. But these are simply natural and necessary results; and, let me say it reverently, it is inconceivable that God himself should ever help it or change it. For we do not believe to-day that we can count on God as interfering with his left hand with what he is all the time doing with his right hand. God does not contradict himself.

If a man does right, he will get paid for it. How? Let me enter here for a moment on the suggestion of a very important thought, because I have come in contact with it almost every day of my life.

I have had people say to me: Why was my child taken ill? I have loved my child. I have tried to take good care of my child. I have trained my child; I have tried to be a good mother. Why was I punished in this way? Men come to me, and say: I have tried to be an honest man. There is not a dollar in my pocket that I have not a right to. I have been a kind father, a true husband, and a faithful friend. Why do I not get along in the world any better? In other words, Why does not my business prosper?

Do you not see, friends, that all these questions presup-

pose an entirely arbitrary and unreasonable government of the world?

The man who has financial ability and who is able to take advantage of the markets, able to obey the financial conditions and laws of his time, will make money; and it makes no sort of difference, so far as that is concerned, as to whether he is a good man or a bad man, does it?

The theory of Job, the theory of the Old Testament all the way through, was that prosperity in this world was a sign of God's paying people for being good. You remember the Psalmist: he must have had a curious experience, certainly very unlike mine, when he says, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I never seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread." He must have had a very strange experience. I have been young, and am not very old; and I have seen the righteous forsaken and his seed begging bread a hundred times.

And remember, friends, it is not written in His universe anywhere that God has promised to pay cash for good behavior.

Jesus said, Blessed are the pure in heart; for — Why? For they shall have a hundred thousand dollars? No, they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-makers. Why? Because they shall have good health? No, they shall be called the children of their Father who is in heaven. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall have what? Have their galleries full of beautiful pictures? No, they shall be filled — with what? With righteousness!

In the realm of right and wrong the law of cause and effect holds just as it does anywhere else. If a man ploughs his field and plants his crops and attends them carefully,

other things being equal, he will be rewarded, or attain the result of having a good crop; but, if he neglects that for the sake of going to church, even if he sits up every night in the week and engages in earnest prayer, it will have no effect whatever on his crops.

A man may cultivate his own character; and he will reap rewards of character. If he wants rewards out of his field, he must cultivate not his character, but his field. This is the law of God both in field and in character; but you get your results in the realm where you start in action your causes.

In the real universe, then, you are never rewarded, you are never punished: you reap what you sow.

I wish to note here, in passing, one grand distinction that you ought to keep in mind between two uses of the word "law," which are perpetually confounded. When a lawyer or a judge or a member of Congress or Parliament is talking about law, he refers to an arbitrary enactment which has been passed by a majority, and imposed upon the people from without. When the scientist talks about a law or when we talk about a law of God, we do not mean anything of the kind. We are referring simply to the orderly procession of phenomenal events. We say that it is a law of water that it shall freeze at thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit. We say it is a law of gases that they shall do thus and so. We talk about the law which governs the planets so that they move after a definite and ascertained order.

We mean simply, then, in the natural and universal realm, when we use the word "law," to refer to a perfect and unvarying order of events, not to a statute law at all.

Now what does worship come to on this theory of religion? Worship on the old theory, as we have seen, is the

bringing offerings, or it means certain ceremonies, it is praying, it is singing psalms, it is uttering words of praise.

Worship on the real theory, in the real universe, and as a part of God's real religion, is simply, when we analyze it to its roots, admiration. He who admires that which is true, that which is beautiful, that which is good, worships; and he worships God whether he knows it or not, simply because everything that is true and everything that is beautiful and everything that is good is simply so far a manifestation of God.

He who admires, then, worships, and he who serves God serves him by being good; and that means, when it is wrought out into activity, into practical life, being of service to one's fellow-men. There is no other way.

Does God want me to bring animals and kill them and burn them for him, so that he can smell the sweet savor of them, as it is said in the Old Testament he liked to do? We do not hold that childish idea of God any more. Does God care whether we sing psalms to him? I do not believe he does. Does God like to sit up on a throne, and have us come and prostrate ourselves in the dust before him, making him glad by just so much as we abjectly humiliate ourselves? I do not believe he does. Does God care to have us spend time in telling what a great and wonderful being he is? I do not believe it.

Think, friends! Here is a man who gets up on a throne, and actually likes to have people come and bow down in the dust before him, sing hymns to him, burn offerings in his presence, and tell him what a wonderful man he is. Would you have any respect for him? I should not. You would say a man who likes that sort of flattery is by just the degree of his liking for it contemptible.

Now I think that God is fully as grand as my ideal man is; and I do not believe he likes that kind of thing any better than a decent man would like it. I am not saying that these things are not good; but, if we think that we are flattering God, buying the special favor of God with them, or purchasing cessation of his anger on account of it, we are very shallow in our thinking, that is all.

These things — that is, the expression of our admiration for that which is above us — thrill and help and lift us. If an artist stands in the presence of one of the masterpieces of the older time, admires it critically, studies it, praises it, it lifts and helps him. If we give expression to our admiration for some noble, some heroic deed, we are the better men on account of it.

What does God want of us in the way of worship? He wants us to admire all that is admirable; and he wants us to give him — what? Not the cattle: he has told us two thousand years ago that they are his already. He does not want your rivers of oil nor your burnt-offerings, nor any of these things. He wants you to do justly and to love mercy. He wants you to be a true man. Can you be anything better than that?

Suppose, for example, that I were able to place here in your presence a man of perfect physique, as beautiful as Apollo, in perfect health, and that man should have a mind that was like a pair of scales in weighing truth, as clear as an electric light in detecting error or fraud,— a mind that should be a perfect machine for the discovery of intellectual truth. Suppose he should be simply ideal, loving all that is admirable and hating all that is evil,— a child of the Infinite Spirit, linked with him by that tie that is closer than the ties of blood. You would say, There is a perfect man.

Could you make him any more perfect by making him religious?

The point I wish you to note is that this man, ideally related to all the laws of God in heart and mind and soul, is already religious just because he is that.

When I have obeyed all the laws of God and have come into right relations with God in every part of my being, religion has exhausted itself in me, and can do no more for me; and I am no better for any ceremonies or external forms whatsoever.

Mark you, I am not saying anything about these external ceremonies. If they help you to be a better man, that is the test by which you are to try them.

All this, then, leads me to the last point,— the summing up, the conclusion of the whole matter, which is that religion, on this theory of the universe and of the religious life which I have been discussing, religion is a life. *Religion is a life.* Let me illustrate the difference between what I mean and what people are thinking, it seems to me two-thirds of them, to-day.

You find most people, if they stay away from church a particular Sunday, no matter how good a reason they have for doing so, will feel that they have neglected their religious duties for that week. If you have gone to church every Sunday in the year, and that is all you have done, you have neglected your religious duties very sadly, neglected the most important of them. Why?

Here is a regiment that has an armory. At stated times it meets in the armory to drill, to study, to go through the exercises, to get ready for — what? To get ready to do it again? Not quite. To get ready, if the time ever should come when they are needed to fight for the country. That is what it is for.

Would you say, then, that in time of war the regiment that met regularly at the drill hall and went through the manual of arms, and then disbanded and went home again, had performed its duty by the country, had performed its patriotic duty? However badly it may be needed at the front, though the capitol be in danger for the matter of that, every regiment is doing its patriotic duty in that very way, just as faithfully as you are doing your religious duty by merely going to church. But what about religion during the week?

The drill hall is for practice, to get ready to fight in the field. The church is simply a drill hall, a place where you are to come to learn what you are to do, to get inspired to do it; but the field for your religion is Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday and Friday and Saturday. It is in the home, it is on the sidewalk, it is in your bank, your office, your manufactory,— wherever you may be.

Suppose you cheat in your business. Will the elaborate knowledge of your Prayer Book make up for it? Suppose you slander your neighbor, ruin his reputation, and injure his chances for a decent living in the world: can you make up for it by attending church regularly?

Do these things touch each other, friends? People are always talking about religion in business and business in religion, politics in religion, and religion in politics. And I have heard ever since I was a boy about mixing up religion and politics, and religion and business. If you mean by religion clericalism, ecclesiasticism, priestcraft, then I agree with you; but, if you mean by religion the only thing that God can mean by it,— a religious life,— then you have no business to do anything except to mix it up most thoroughly with your politics, to mix it up completely with your business.

It is the man who is a true and noble man in his business who is a religious man, the man who is a true and noble man in his family who is a religious man. It is the man who obeys the real, vital, eternal laws of God, inherent in the nature of things, who is a religious man. And this is salvation.

None of these external things have any necessary connection with any place in this world or any other world that you want to get out of or get into. I have no fears of going to hell: I have no care about going to heaven. I am anxious to keep hell out of me and to get heaven into me. Then I care very little what planet I am on after I have left this one. I will take care of my relations to God; and I will risk the kind of association that I shall fall into, in this world or any other world.

# STANDING GROUND FOR TRUST.

It is said that Prince Alphonso of Castile, considering one day with some friends the intricacies and difficulties of the Ptolemaic theory of the universe,— that being at the time the generally accepted one,— declared that, if he had been present at the creation of the world, he could easily have suggested a good many important improvements,— which was undoubtedly true. But his objections have been answered by the discovery of the Copernican theory, which has shown that the difficulties of the Ptolemaic were only imaginary.

The witty Colonel Ingersoll is reported to have said some years ago, when some one asked him — he was criticising the order of the world — whether he could suggest any improvements if he had his way, that he could at least suggest one,— he would have good health catching instead of disease.

It seems to me, however, that he overlooked what I regard as undeniably true,— that not only good health, but good of every kind, is catching. Good health is contagious; and the man who walks down the street smiling and cheerful and happy carries inspiration and power with him as he goes. And good of every kind is catching; and it is not only contagious, but it is so much more wide-spread and so much more effectual than the opposite that the evil is destined by and by to be outgrown in the race and left entirely behind.

John Stuart Mill made a criticism which at the time he made it seemed to be unanswerable. Regarding the world, in its then present order and condition, as a final and finished product, Mill said: God cannot be almighty and all-wise and all-good. If he is almighty and all-wise, then he cannot have desired to make a very good world; for he has not done it. If he be almighty and all-good, then he cannot have known how to make a perfect world; for he has not done it. If he be all-good and all-wise, then he cannot have had power to make a perfect world; for he has not done it. I quote the thought, not the words.

This criticism, I say, from the point of view of a world supposed to be finished, is entirely valid; but only a little while after this criticism was formulated the science of evolution was born, and the world was brought face to face with entirely another problem.

The world as we know it is only in process. It is not to be judged as a finished and final product. Would you go into an apple orchard, and, biting into an apple in late June, — an apple that is to be ripe only in the last of September, — would you judge it as a bad apple because it was bitter? You would expect it to be bitter while it was in the process of growth. If you wish to judge anything, wait until it is finished, wait until you can see the outcome, what it is for.

And so I say of this world. In the light of the science of evolution it is to-day only in process; and, unless you can foresee the outcome so as to be quite sure as to whether it is to be bad, as an honest man and a clear-headed one, you must at least suspend judgment, and wait.

I do not wish to doubt or to blink any of the great facts of suffering or evil. They exist, open to every eye and appealing to every heart, whichever way we turn; and

I do not wonder that people are perpetually brought to a stand-still as they face some new illustration of the world's wrong or pain, and wonder as to the government of the universe.

I have been asked so many times since I have been in this city as to what right we have, in the face of these facts, to trust in God. The matter has been brought to me, and forced upon my attention so frequently that it seemed to me that the best thing I could do was to attempt, at any rate, an answer. You will not expect a detailed treatment of a theme that might profitably be drawn out to the length of volumes.

And another thing let me say: You have no right to ask of me that in forty minutes I should answer all the objections you can bring against human life or the universe as it looks to you. You have no right to expect that I should explain all these difficulties. I can only attempt — what? This,— to discover, if I may, standing ground for trust. If I can find a place where we may stand on something like solid ground, and rationally believe in the goodness of God, that is enough to answer the practical ends of living.

I do not expect to answer many questions. Millions have been asked, only a very few answered. Mystery faces us on every hand. If some one of you will explain to me a grass-blade a finger length high, I will explain for you all the rest of the universe. We face infinite mystery on every hand. It is fortunate for us that we do; for, if we could read the riddle of this universe, we should be reading our death warrants. There would be nothing else left for us to do. Hope of anything like immortality would be absurd,— not only absurd, but a curse,— if we knew everything, and nothing more was left for us to investigate.

So, I say, I am not going to attempt to answer all your questions. I am merely going to see if I can find standing ground for reasonable trust.

Now what are the chief objections that are brought against this world?

I think I can classify them for the purpose of the morning under three or four main heads.

In the first place is the fact of pain, suffering; next is what we call moral evil; then comes the unsatisfactoriness of human life,—the fact that we never succeed in getting all we want, in doing all we want, in becoming all we want, that all human life, even at the best, is fragmentary; and, finally, the last and supposed overwhelming evil of death.

I wish to refer briefly to these four, and to the evils that are classified under them.

In the first place, then, let us look for a moment at this great problem of pain. Is it possible, if a good God is in the universe or rules the universe, that he should permit so much suffering?

Now, as a preliminary step to such brief consideration of this great theme as I shall have time for this morning, I wish to eliminate from the problem two things. In the first place let us get rid of the exaggeration that I believe is in the minds of most people in regard to the amount of suffering which exists.

Do not for a moment suppose that I would take any position or suggest any thought that would harden any man's heart or make him less tender towards the sufferings of the world; but, if we are going to bring an indictment against the government of the universe, let us do the best we can to have it a true indictment, not an exaggerated one.

I wish, therefore, to suggest to you that I believe with my whole soul that there is not anything like the quantity of suffering in this world that thousands and thousands of sensitive people have come to believe there is.

One of the characteristics of this modern world is almost a morbid sensitiveness to suffering. In the first place look upon the beasts of the field, the animals of the forests, and the fishes of the sea. Take the whole lower life of the world, and in spite of the stories of pursuit and slaying and blood that we imagine, as we study it, it is almost entirely a scene of limitless joy, delight in being.

If I had time this morning to go into detail, I could show you, I think, in the case of the pursuit of one animal by another, and the violent death that follows, that there is almost no pain in it at all. Livingstone tells us that once, in Africa, he was pursued and struck down by a lion; and the minute the lion's paw was upon him he was, as it were, hypnotized,— no suffering, no pain,— simply looking up at the ferocious monster and wondering what was going to happen next.

Scientific men will tell you that in the lower life of the world there is not the nervous susceptibility to pain that there is on the part of its highly and sensitively developed men and women.

Then take the barbarous races, the wild Indians of the plains. It would be a horrible thing for one of us to go and be compelled to live as they do or as the wild men of Central Africa live. But it is not a horrible thing from their point of view: they are having a very good time indeed; and we simply exaggerate unnecessarily the problem of pain when we suppose them to be feeling about it as we should if we were now thrust down to their place. They have come

to this low level, not by being hurled down to it from above, but by climbing up to it from underneath.

If a man is living on five thousand dollars a year, and you reduce it to four thousand, he is the poorest man in the city. If he is living on five hundred, and you increase his income to six hundred a year, he is rich.

All this shows us, then, that these barbarous people who have climbed up from a lower level to a higher do not go through the suffering we should if we were to take their places. They are on the up grade: we should be on the down grade.

Let me suggest, merely as another point for you to consider, that in your own cases — those of you who think you have the hardest time in the world — you have not been one-half as miserable as you like to believe. There gets to be a sort of satisfaction in being the most miserable person in the world, if we cannot be distinguished in any other way. You will find people looking over their lives, and complaining, forgetting to look at the bright days, the sunshiny days, until their whole heaven is one mass of cloud. But it is false. I have had my share of suffering. I do not believe that there are many of you here to-day who have had much more,— there may be some; but I know, if I should take the dark and sad days of my life and put them in one place, and the bright days and put them in another, the darkness would be no more than as a spot on the sun.

We easily forget a week of bright, sunshiny weather; but we are very likely to grumble if it rains, and we are caught without an umbrella. Let us not exaggerate, then, the amount of the world's suffering.

There is, too, another class of suffering that I wish you

to leave out of the account, because you have no right to bring it against God as an impeachment of his government of the universe; and that is the needless suffering, the suffering that we passionately, purposely, wilfully inflict on each other. And how large a part is this! How much of the world's suffering is made up in this way!

Leave out of account, then, the imagined sufferings of the world and the sufferings we ourselves cause, and then you have left simply the necessary pain, that pain which we may reasonably regard as a part of the divine order and plan. Now what about that?

In the first place, if you stop and think of it one moment, you will see that it is an absurdity, an impossibility, to imagine the existence of a being who can feel the sensation of pleasure who cannot also equally feel the sensation of pain. Sensitiveness must be sensitiveness in both directions. There can be no possibility of pleasure, then, without the possibility of pain.

Then, in the next place, suppose that the world — that is, the whole human race — had been perfectly, blissfully happy from the first moment of the world's creation until now. It never would have known it. If the world were all one color, it would be as though it were no color: we should be practically blind. The only way we can see things is by definition, separation, distinction,— separating things from each other. If they were all alike, it would be as though we could not see at all.

So, if we had never known anything of pain, we never should know we were happy. Happiness would be absolutely without meaning. That is a scientific truth for you to keep hold of, if you can, when you are discussing the difficulties of this problem.

In the third place consider another point. If you could conceive as living here on this planet a race of creatures, no matter what their grade, from the lowest up to man, which was incapable of feeling pain, you would be dealing with a race that would not continue in existence for six months.

Suppose fire did not hurt; suppose a blow did not hurt, a stroke of an axe did not hurt, falling off a precipice did not hurt; suppose nothing hurt. Why, we should be broken to pieces and ground to powder inside of six months, the whole of us. Pain is simply God's danger signal set up, telling us to keep away from that which threatens us with harm,— that is all.

So the necessary pain of the universe, that which we have any right to bring as an indictment against the government of this universe, it is clearly to be demonstrated, is only and always beneficent. There is nothing in human life that is more clearly a token of the fact that "God is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works," than is just this existence of pain, which we so frequently and so foolishly bring as an indictment against the government of this world.

Let us come now for a moment to consider the next of these great indictments, the existence of moral evil. Right here, friends, I am going to take a position that may surprise you a little. I ask you to look over the world, and see if I am not correct about it. We have been taught by the theology in which we were trained — I have — to think of the world as bad, totally depraved and vile. We have been taught that God likes to have us humble ourselves in the dust, and talk about what poor, miserable, sinful worms we are. We go into the churches, and declare, in the words of

the Prayer Book, that "we have done the things we ought not to have done and have not done the things we ought to have done, and there is no health in us," — when, if a single one of our neighbors looked us in the face and made that statement, we would not speak to him afterwards. You don't believe a word of it!

We have been taught to look upon human nature as something vile. One of the grandest points in the new gospel which is being preached in this regenerate nineteenth century is the precise opposite of that: man is not vile. There is infinitely more good in this city of New York than there is evil. If the evil in this city were in the majority, there would be no city. It is as absolutely certain as the multiplication table.

For what do we mean by evil? Evil is that which hurts, which injures, which tears to pieces, which disintegrates. Evil is that which separates between man and man. The simple fact, then, that there is such a thing as society, that people exist together on terms of friendliness and co-operation and mutual help, proves that the disintegrating forces are in the minority.

Our newspapers, without intending it, are responsible for a great deal of the pessimism of the present time.

Consider a moment. A man committed a burglary last night; the cashier of a bank defaulted yesterday; in some back alley a man struck his wife or perhaps one of his children; and what is the result? The whole thing, illustrated in all its nauseous details, is spread before us on our breakfast table; and people read and look up, and say, "Whom can we trust?" — as if they expected the next man they met to be a burglar or a defaulter or to be abusing his wife or children.

As matter of fact, however, the percentage of the people in New York who are doing any of these things is practically infinitesimal. Note the significance of this statement, —*behaving one's self is not news!* The newspapers are looking after sensations. Thousands of people yesterday behaved themselves; but nobody thought of reporting it. The great majority of people yesterday went about their business, patiently doing their work. Men with thousands of dollars that they might have stolen, and they never took a penny; men who needed it; men who could not pay their debts; men whose wives needed clothing, whose children wanted bread,— they had opportunities to steal; and they never took one cent. Men and women thrown together in all sorts of relations, tempted in every conceivable way; and yet, out of the three and a half millions of Greater New York, hardly enough persons to be worth speaking of committed a crime yesterday.

That is the clear, cold, simple fact of the statistics.

Men are not half so bad, then, as we give them credit for being. I have been over this world a good deal in my time. I think I know what is taking place in it from the top to the bottom of society; and, the older I get, the greater, the grander is my trust in men and women, the greater grows my wonder, not that they sometimes go astray, but that they do not go astray more frequently than they do. I have a great loving belief in the essential goodness of men and women; and it is justified by fact.

Remember, then, that we have not got such a tremendous problem on our hands as we sometimes imagine, in the pessimism of the time and in the light of the old theology When we come to deal with this problem of evil, we must turn it around. The old philosophy dealt with the origin of

evil: we start, in the light of the evolution of the universe, with the origin of goodness.

Consider first a world alive with animals and birds, struggling, fighting, killing,— all these things here, but no moral evil yet. Why? Because there is no conscience, no intelligence that perceives the distinction between good and evil. When the conscience is born at last, it is out of an unmoral universe that comes a moral race of beings; it is good that is born, not evil; it is the distinction between right and wrong. And from that far-off day to this men and women have been climbing up out of the animal and towards the angel, have been sloughing off the characteristics of the tiger, the bear, the snake, all the evil of the outgrown life, and climbing up into tenderness and goodness and pity and human help,— all that is divine.

The problem, then, is not as to how evil came into the world or how to account for it. Remember that this experience with what we call evil is absolutely necessary to the culture and development of a moral being. There could be no noble men and women to graduate from this school of earth if it were not for this contest with the lower in our natures and the struggle against the seductiveness of the evil outside of us and around us.

It is out of this fight with the evil of the world, as we call it, that the sweetest and noblest and best things are born.

The next great count against the universe is that life is so unsatisfactory. Wordsworth draws a very beautiful but sentimental picture of the child born with all heaven around it in its infancy, and of how the world grows very commonplace as he gets into middle life, under the hard sky, and his feet tramp the dusty ways of the world. But I tell you, friends, it is only as you lose your higher faculty of vision, your own

finer ideals, that you listen to the stories that tell you of only the harder and worse side of things.

The man who sees no more poetry in the world is not the one who has discovered the real secret of life: he is the one who has lost it, and so says nothing is there. The man who loses the ideal and beauty out of his married life is not the man who has sounded the world, and found it hollow: he is the man whose own capacity for finding sweet things has become blunted or weakened. They are all there.

So this fact that we cannot find complete satisfaction in this world,—that we are all Alexanders crying for more worlds to conquer; that no one can get rich enough, no one can get famous enough, no one can get good enough, or attain anything he wants to completely or become anything he wants to completely,—this fact, instead of being an indictment against life, is one of its grandest qualities and characteristics.

Suppose this world could feed us and bestow upon us all we desired: would it not prove that there was nothing in us fitting us for anything finer and greater beyond this world? If a man puts a plant into a flower-pot and stands it on a shelf in his hot-house, and then the plant develops so that it breaks the pot that encloses it, and it demands that even the roof be lifted so it can get outdoors, he has discovered that his plant was adapted for something larger and grander than his little hot-house, however beautiful and fine it may have been.

So, when you find a creature,—call him commonplace, if you will,—a man who finds this world not big enough to satisfy him, who demands more room, who asks to be set free, who wants to know more than this earth can teach him, who wants to become greater than the possibility of

being here, is not the inference, whether you expect it or not, that you are dealing with a sort of nature that may have in it the necessity of demanding a higher and larger place for its perfect unfolding? That, at any rate, is the way I read a suggestion like this.

Now let us come to the great fact of death. Is that an adequate impeachment of the wisdom or goodness of God?

Right here let me say, as I did of pain and of evil, that there are any number of things that we associate with death that do not necessarily belong there at all: they are no part of the great fact of passing out of this world into what I believe to be another.

Consider in the first place that a large part of the horror that we associate with the word "death" is born of the superstitious religion, the hideous theology, that we have inherited from our barbarous ancestors. They are no part of the fact of dying at all. They are the imagined terrors that men fear may follow after death, those things which in Hamlet's famous soliloquy gave him "pause."

Then we associate with death the pains of disease. But this is what we suffer all our lives long, and which comes — nine-tenths of it — from the breaking of laws that we have no need to break. We associate this needless pain with dying. Besides, I have found hundreds of persons who have been accustomed to attach to this one experience all sorts of imaginary horrors. They talked as though they were going to be buried; and they shrank from the thought of a grave. The grave should have no terrors for any one.

You remember, when Socrates's disciples asked him what they should do with him after he drank the hemlock, he said humorously, "You may do whatever you please with me, if you can catch me." He did not expect to be there; he did not expect to be buried.

The dread in the minds of many people is as if they were going to be buried. But these are imaginary horrors we associate with death. Let us leave them one side. Death stripped of these unreal terrors is merely a passage, at the worst, from this world to sleep; at the best, from this world to another and grander world.

Now let us look at death with this thought simply in mind. What are the alternatives to dying? If God would confer upon me the gift of immortality, and not give it to my friends, do you suppose I would take it? It seems to me it would be simply horrible to live here year after year, century after century, with those I had learned to love and care for somewhere else. I can imagine that I might even frantically knock at the door, and beg if I might be let through to see if I could find some of those who had gone before.

Suppose God should confer an earthly immortality on everybody: what would happen? Why, it would not take a great while for the world to be packed full. There would be just as many people here as the earth could possibly maintain. Then what? No more childhood! That alone would be enough to make me want to die, and wish that I might go to some place where they had some children. All grown-up people, looking in each other's faces for thousands of years! I fancy we should be tired to death of it, or wish we might be "tired to death." We should learn all that the world had to teach us after a while, we should explore every continent and every sea; and the world would become to us like an open book. Should we not long to see if there was anything else in the universe? It seems to me that at night we should look at those radiant spheres that swing and sing above us, and long with the longing of

heartache and tears to launch off into space, to get free of this cramped and crowded earth, and find out if there were not something else, something grander, something better.

This dreaded death, when we have stripped it of the things that do not belong to it as a part of God's ordaining, is simply the divine gate-opener to let us out, to help us escape from the prison-house of one little planet, and give us the freedom, the citizenship, of the universe. Death is not something to be apologized for. I believe it to be one of the divinest, noblest, sweetest, grandest gifts of the Father to his children.

There is only one thing left about death that ever troubles me in the slightest degree; and that is the temporary separation from those I love. I have no fear of it: I do not expect to suffer any. In ninety-nine cases in a hundred, death is only sleep; and the person passing through the experience knows no more of it than you can tell me the exact moment when you lost consciousness last night. We look on, and see the muscular and nervous movements, and imagine suffering of which the person himself is not at all conscious.

I believe, then, that death is one of the very best of God's gifts to men. Surely, friends, if I believe that it is only an experience through which we pass out into a larger and grander life, then it does not need to be apologized for. And, if there is anybody that challenges me to prove that death is a good, I will turn, and say that it is a good, and that he has no right to impeach it until he can prove to me, — what nobody can prove,— that it is the end.

I believe, then, that, rightly considered, neither pain nor moral evil, nor dissatisfaction with life, nor even death itself, has anything to say against the magnificent assertion of the

old Hebrew singer,— "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."

I must ask you now, as hurriedly as possible, to think of one thing more. I have studied it for years. Recognizing the difficulties connected with the present world, I have been trying to think out a better one; and I cannot do it. Will some of you help me? What kinds of worlds can we imagine? We might imagine a world in which there was no feeling at all,— but of course we should not be there,— so we pass that by.

We might imagine a world in which the inhabitants should be automatons, bits of curious mechanism. God might make us as a Frenchman makes a mechanical toy,— wind us up, so that we should go accurately. But all growth, all study, all achievement, all advance, all doing anything or becoming anything, would have to be left out. Would you be willing to exchange the present world for that? I would not.

We might imagine that God could create a world in which all the people would be perfectly wise and perfectly good, so that they should never make a mistake and never do wrong. But that, on the face of it, is an absurdity, an impossibility.

We fool ourselves sometimes in discussing these great questions, by thinking that God can do everything that we happen to imagine simply because he is almighty. Do you never stop to think that there are limits to almightiness? Almighty power could not have two and two make five. Almighty power could not make two mountains without a valley between them.

There are some things that are impossible because they are absurd.

Now consider a moment. What do we mean by knowledge? The only meaning it has or can have, we being constituted as we are, is this: the summed up results of human experience in the intellectual realm. So God himself cannot create knowledge except through the process of experience by which it is arrived at.

God cannot make people, then, perfectly wise in a minute. It is a contradiction in terms. Can he make them perfectly good in a minute? What do we mean by goodness, by morality, by virtue? We mean the summed up results of human experience, striving against and putting evil under our feet. Morality, virtue, goodness, have no meaning apart from this struggle of ours in conquering evil.

So this theory of the universe is an impossibility and an absurdity.

What next? We can imagine that life might be a scene of perpetually repeated miracles,— that every little child from the time it began to walk should be watched over by an angel; that, if it stubbed its toe, the angel should snatch it, and hold it up on its feet. And, then, you might think of moral falls guarded against in the same way. Every time a person was going to do wrong an angel should interpose and prevent it.

We could imagine a world like that; but think of it! Anything like the natural development of anybody would be impossible. There would be no knowing anything in a world like that. You would never know what was going to happen next. Intellectually, men and women would be only babies in a nursery, watched over so that it would be impossible for them to experience and so learn anything. Anything like moral development would be out of the question in a world where people were shielded and guarded

like that. It would be a perpetual nursery or a mad-house: men and women would be grown-up children or imbeciles.

Now the only other kind of world I can think of is that which we are living in,— where men and women begin by making mistakes, then correcting their mistakes and leaving them behind; where people start morally feeble, and learn the distinction between right and wrong by trying them, and learn that right is best by trying it. So they become tender-hearted and true. They learn that it is best to keep God's laws; and in such keeping is the happiness and welfare of the world. Thus the sad song of pain and ignorance and evil that has been chanted by a wandering and sinning world so long shall at last sink out of hearing, and become only a memory.

I believe, then, that, if we look the problem squarely in the face, and try to deal with the facts as they are, we shall conclude that this is the best kind of a world of which we are capable of dreaming. If it is simply a world in which we are at school, learning how to live; if we are doing the only thing which Browning says is worth doing,— that is, cultivating and developing a soul; if the end and aim of this life is learning to be men and women, so that, when death comes, we are only graduating into a fitness for another higher field of experience, of life, of labor, of hope, of joy,— then I cannot conceive a better school than the one we are really in.

Let us learn, therefore, that the best thing we can do is not to increase the sum of animal or human pain, not to add to the amount of injury and wrong, but see to it that we do what we can, in living nobly and truly ourselves, to help others to live nobly and truly. Then we shall find that the darkness of the problem shall grow lighter, and that cheer and hope shall lead on and animate the hearts of the world.

# MAN NOT FALLEN, BUT RISING.

THE doctrine of the fall of man in Adam, his having been originally created perfect and having lost the divine likeness by voluntary transgression, is the corner-stone, the main foundation, of all the historic churches of Christendom,—Catholic, Greek, Protestant.

In other words, if you will think the matter out with clearness, you will see that all the other chief doctrines are dependent on this. So true is this that, if men had never believed in any fall, the other essentials of the historic creeds would probably never have come into existence.

It is, then, of the first importance for us, in the light of our modern knowledge, reverently, earnestly, clearly, to examine this foundation stone, and see whether it is secure.

At the very outset, it is most interesting and of great importance for us to notice that the Hebrews are not the only ones who have traditions of an earlier condition of humanity that is better than that which followed it. We find not only the one tradition in other nations than the Jewish, but we find, curiously enough, both among the Jews and among other peoples, parallel and contradictory traditions, showing, as we shall see in a moment, that there are two types of human mind,—one the backward-looking, the other the forward-looking,—and that they both have had their representatives in every age.

I wish, to make this matter clear, to call your brief atten-

tion to the parallel traditions, to which I have referred, as they appear among the Greeks and the Romans.

In the first place there is the Prometheus myth. According to this, men began their history on this earth in the most helpless, weak, ignorant, abject condition. They were without fire, without any of the means by which they might create around themselves a condition approaching civilization. They were despised and hated by the Olympian gods. Zeus looks upon them with contempt, and, it was thought, also with antagonism. Prometheus, the old Titan, perhaps having something more of a feeling of kinship with these abject and despised creatures than the deities who sat on the cloudless summits of Olympus, steals the celestial fire, and brings it down in a reed, and makes a gift of it to men. Thus he confers upon them the possibility of advance, growth, civilization. But the god who had hated humanity is angry; and he chains the old Titan on the rocks in the Caucasus, where he lies, age after age, while the eagles devour his vitals during the daytime, which grow again, to be consumed once more, during the following night.

Here is the Prometheus myth in outline. The point I wish you to notice is, that among the ancient classical people there was a belief concerning the original condition of this world of ours which falls in remarkably with the modern science of evolution. This story teaches that men began away down close on the borders of the animal world; and it places the golden age in the future, as something to be attained, not something away from which the race has fallen.

On the other hand, having found its completest development among the Latin races, you will find the Saturnian myth. According to this the earlier condition of the world was its golden age. The god Saturn, father of the rest of

the gods as well as of men, lived on the earth among his blessed and happy children, men and women. There was no death, no sickness, no pain, no hatred, no wars, no evils of any kind. This was the blessed condition of things that was dreamed of as having existed at the beginning of human history. But evil times came upon them. Saturn departed; could no more bear or countenance the conduct, the evils, the sins and the wrongs of his children.

Then came the age of brass. This was followed by the age of iron. And so the poor old world, according to this theory, has been on the down grade from the beginning, getting worse and worse age after age.

Here you see are these two parallel and yet contradictory traditions. Before commenting upon them, I wish to call your attention to the fact that precisely such parallel and contradictory traditions are found in the Old Testament.

If the books of the Old Testament were printed in the chronological order in which they were written, the earliest one would be the Prophet Amos. The prophetic books would go before the Pentateuch, then those we call historical, like Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles. The older prophets take us back to a period about eight hundred years before the birth of Jesus.

Now I wish you to take notice that in the prophets this is, without exception, true: in the prophets, the earliest writers of the Hebrew people, there is no fall of man. There is no reference to the doctrine anywhere among them. They make no comment on it whatever. So far as any word of theirs is concerned, they have never heard of it. An apparent exception may be found in Ezekiel, who lived during the captivity. He refers to Eden in a poetical way as being a beautiful garden.

According to the prophets, then, there never was any fall of man. He began in a condition of weakness and ignorance; and the golden age, the period of the Messianic hope, is with them always in the future. They look forward to the coming of this Messianic period, when men shall have outgrown the evils of the past, and have come up into the likeness of the Divine.

But along with that tradition we find this story of Eden, Adam and Eve, the forbidden tree, its eating, the serpent, the being cast out, and all the train of evils that are supposed to have followed.

Now where did this come from? For I wish you to note, as it is of great importance, that it was not an original tradition of the Jewish race at all. It was never heard of on the part of the Hebrew people until they came in contact with the Babylonians and the Persians during the times of their captivity.

It is an old pagan myth borrowed by the Hebrews, at least six, perhaps eight, hundred years after the time of Moses, no part of the original story, something that came later, observe, into the life of the Hebrew people, not earlier than five or six hundred years before the birth of Christianity.

Here, then, you see are these two parallel and contradictory stories among the Hebrews, as we find them among the classical peoples.

And now I wish you to note that these parallel and contradictory traditions represent two states of mind on the part of humanity. You find them in every age. There are to-day certain people who are always looking back. They talk of the good old times when they were boys, of their father's or their grandfather's day, or of the early days of the

republic. They are always looking back for better things than they can discover in their immediate vicinity to-day, and holding the idea that the world is coming to be worse and worse from generation to generation. You find them the prophets of evil and degeneracy in our political life. You find them in our industrial life,— the rich are getting richer, and the poor are getting poorer, and the business condition of the world is worse now than it ever was before, and there is no prospect of its improving. You find them dealing with our social problems. The world, according to them, used to be socially pure and high. In those old days there were gentlemen and ladies such as the world has never seen since. In every department of life it is the same: the good old times are hopelessly gone, according to them.

On the other hand, you will find the type of mind represented by those who have the forward look. Who are these? They are the workers, hopeful and strong. They are the seers, they are the prophets, they are the great poets of the world.

Note one magnificent and significant truth: there is not a great poet with whose works I am familiar who is a pessimist. They are all prophets, filled and inspired with hope, with the possibilities of the race.

I must not stop to deal with this problem far enough to say which of these is true; or, at any rate, to go into a long, loving defence of the one that you must be aware that I believe in. I have studied carefully the history of man from the beginning; and I believe the statement will hold, politically, industrially, socially, so far as the family is concerned, so far as business is concerned,— in any department of human life the statement will hold, that the world is unspeakably better to-day than it ever has been in any fifty years of the past history of the race.

But that is not the subject of my sermon this morning. I wish now to recall you to this Eden story, and consider with you as to why and how such a tale should have come into existence.

Right here let me ask you to note how true it is that there is a tendency in the human mind to tell itself stories as means of explaining strange facts the reason of which they do not scientifically understand.

As an illustration of what I mean. In different parts of this country, in different parts of the Old World, you will find rocks, bowlders of huge size, miles and miles away from the places from which they must have come. That is, these bowlders are not at all like the rock formations in the places where they are found to-day. The aboriginal peoples in Europe and America knew nothing of the glacial epoch, and how science to-day explains with perfect ease the fact that these rocks, worn and shaped as they are, have been dropped in the places where they are found; and so you will find stories of battles of the gods and of the Titans, and how these huge bowlders have been flung, as they piled mountains on top of each other for their defence. And in this way the pictorial faculty of the childhood of the race explains for itself these otherwise inexplicable facts.

All over the world you will find places where there is a depression on some mountain top, or some valley that has a shape in some general fashion of the human foot,— very large, perhaps; and stories spring up of how giants have left their tracks there. You will find in Asia, perhaps in China and Japan, footprints of the Buddha, or of the other deities who have from time to time visited the earth. On the northern coast of Ireland there is a most extraordinary formation called the Giant's Causeway. It looks as though

some marvellous prehistoric people of gigantic size had started to build a wonderful paved way out into the waters of the Irish Channel. So, indeed, myths have sprung up,— it is the Giant's Causeway. In the old days the giants started to build a road over to the neighboring coast of Scotland.

In this way you will find that men are perpetually telling themselves curious stories to explain things which otherwise are inexplicable to them. Thus, I suppose beyond question, the Eden myth has grown up as a philosophical explanation of the existence of evil, of pain, of death, in the world. The early peoples looked out over the face of the earth; and they saw thorns and thistles, briers and weeds, growing in the natural world. They saw that there was death, moral evil, suffering of every kind; and, as they began to believe in the goodness of God, they said to themselves, and with perfectly clear logic from their point of view, God could not have made the world after this fashion in the first place. He must have made it good, and something must have happened that he did not intend.

At first it does not appear to them that they are thinking out a God of limited wisdom or limited power. They have not got as far as that yet. So they teach that the world was created perfect: it was a garden of only fruits and flowers,— no briers, no thorns, no ugly, no worthless weeds. All fair and lovely; and the first man and the first woman were put into this garden, not to know anything about sin or evil of any kind, never to feel a pang of pain, never to die. The beautiful Hebrew tradition was that, if they had not committed this sin, not eaten this fruit which theologians allude to, they would have been transported to heaven without dying.

Of course, we know that a dream like that to-day is childish, absurd, impossible, by reason of the nature of the universe in which we live. But this was the old tradition. This was their way of explaining how death and sin and sorrow and everything wrong came into the world. God not only drove them out of the garden, but he cursed the soil for their sake; and he cursed the serpent, and made him, from walking upright,— a fact which scientists cannot understand,— crawl in the dust, and eat dust — another curious error — for his food.

This, then, was the story which grew up, and which the Jews borrowed from their neighbors.

Now let us note two or three points. I say this tale came into existence as a philosophical attempt at explaining the existence of evil in the world. But mark you, in the first place, it does not explain. The Hebrews tell us in their old-time traditions, as recorded in this book, that this occurred about four thousand and four years before the birth of Jesus. We know to-day that thorns and thistles and briers have been on this planet hundreds of thousands of years. We know that death has been on this planet as long as life has. We know that pain has been here from the very beginning of the organization of a nervous system capable of sentiency of any kind.

So, as I said, this story, even if we could believe it to be true, does not explain.

Note in the second place, if it were true, we should be compelled to-day, from the higher point of moral advance which we have reached, to declare it unworthy of God and hopeless for man. It is unjust, it is cruel. We could not accept it as being worthy of any just conception of the government of this world.

Consider for a moment. Here God is represented as having created a man and a woman, perfect indeed, but absolutely without experience,—children, so far as knowledge is concerned. He does not tell them anything beyond the fact that they themselves shall die if they touch this forbidden fruit. And yet, according to the theology of Christendom, on the action of these two infantile, inexperienced, ignorant, weak people, one man and one woman, your immortal destiny hung, and mine. On the choice of these two, utterly unfit to choose, hung the destiny of the countless millions of men and women to be born to the farthest epoch of time! The eternal horror of it!

My friends, were it not treated earnestly by grave and reverend divines as a part of the theological scheme of the world's salvation, it would seem too childish for consideration,—too childish on the intellectual side, too grotesquely hideous on the moral side, to be regarded with seriousness even for a moment.

In the third place, note another thing. Whether it be true or just or not, I wish to emphasize the point, so you will not forget it, that there does not exist on the face of the earth the slightest reason for thinking that such a thing ever happened. There is no more reason for regarding it as historic than there is for treating as historic the labors of Hercules or the descent of Ulysses into the underworld. It is not even Hebrew in its origin. It is pagan, a pagan myth, without the slightest shadow of a shade of evidence in favor of its being historic.

You will find a great many persons, theologians, doctors of divinity, teachers in our seminaries and colleges, who, when they are treating some matter that is hard to believe that is found in the Old Testament, will say, We might

give this up if it stood on its own foundation alone; but — as in the case of the Jonah story that has been cited a hundred times this winter — Jesus referred to it, and indorsed it as true.

But note the significance of the fact: so far as the story of the fall of man is concerned, Jesus did not refer to it. So far as any word of his is concerned, he had never heard of it; or, if he had, he did not consider it of sufficient importance to speak of it.

Then note right here — for I think it is of immense significance, even decisive significance, if there was nothing else to be said — this silence of Jesus. Take for a moment the orthodox point of view. Jesus then was God. He had come to this earth, fallen and ruined, on purpose to save men. He knew that the fall of man was the beginning of all the evil and suffering, the beginning of that endless torment into which the great majority of people had entered and were to enter to the end of time.

Does it not seem a little strange that God, coming down to the world on purpose to save men from the fall, should never have said anything about it? Does it not seem a little peculiar that he should not at least have referred to it? No, not one slightest indication that he knew or cared anything about it whatever!

Now, in the fourth place, I wish to remark concerning this fall of man story, as an explanation of the condition of the race, that God has revealed to the modern world by the hand of his messenger, clear-eyed, truth-loving Science,— God has revealed to the modern world an explanation of the existence of briers and thorns and thistles, of pain, of moral evil, and of death. And the explanation that he has thus given us is one worthy of himself, one honorable to our Father, one full of hope for his children.

For what is this explanation of science? It is that all these growths are natural products of the soil. The thorn, the brier, the thistle, the weeds, are simply the parents, the ancestors of the flowers and fruits. The new began in the bitter and the sharp and the rough; and out of them have evolved all the sweet, all the beautiful, all the helpful things that we discover on the face of the earth.

As to pain, as I had occasion to tell you last Sunday, science tells us that it is inseparable from sentient existence, and not only that, but that it is absolutely essential as a guard and a guide to this sentient existence.

Then, so far as moral evil is concerned, as again I told you last Sunday, science has taught us to know, not to guess, that we have been developed from the lower forms of life here on the earth, and that, instead of evil having originated at the start, it was good which originated at the start; and man has been climbing ever higher and higher, sloughing off the evil and reaching on towards the attainment of the good.

Then, too, death is absolutely essential to an organization like ours, essential to the further growth, deliverance, and advance of man as a spiritual being in another higher and finer world. Death is no after-thought, then. God did not create a world intending to leave death out, and then find that he had been outwitted by his adversary and ours, and that so death was the invasion of an evil power from without, devastating his fair world. Death is part of the intention of God, part of the original universal divine order.

God, then, I say, has revealed to us in this better day not only that the old borrowed mythical pagan story is not true, but he has revealed to us the magnificent and entirely

satisfactory explanation of what that fairy story utterly failed to explain.

Now I wish for a little further to dwell upon this doctrine of the fall of man as it is related to the theological schemes of Christendom.

I was talking with a friend within forty-eight hours; and this friend raised an objection to certain parts of the sermon which I am preaching this morning, based on the supposed conditions and needs of you who I am addressing. I wish to speak of this objection, and appeal to you as to whether it be valid or not.

This friend said that, possibly, making so much of this story of the fall of man was not needed; that people did not believe it now; that perhaps it was threshing old straw which had been sufficiently threshed before. My answer was a twofold one. In the first place, that it seemed to me that we Unitarians need to be educated as to the thought of the past not only, but as to why we hold it no longer, why we are compelled, religiously and in deference to our love and reverence for God, to leave it behind and go on to something which seems to us unspeakably better; that we ought to be able to give others, who inquire what we mean by being Unitarians, an adequate and intelligible reason for the faith that is in us.

Again, in the second place, another reason, I said, is this: people are all the time saying these old doctrines are outgrown, they are not held any longer. And this friend asked, How many ministers in New York do you suppose really believe in the fall of man? My answer was: I do not know. I presume there are some — a very large number of them — who do not believe it. But I added this statement or this question: How many of the ministers in

the city of New York to-day would dare to say in their pulpits that they did not believe it? How many of them would thus risk their standing as ministers?

Why, New York and Brooklyn are in an uproar now, over what? Over the mildest kind of heresy on the part of Dr. Abbott,— heresy that has been commonplace to us for a quarter of a century. Ministers are attacking him; ministerial associations are calling him to account; newspapers are saying he is an infidel. And, if Dr. Abbott were a weaker, smaller man, he might not hold his position for a month.

So long, then, as a childish, utterly absurd pagan story is seriously regarded as part of the divine and infallible revelation of God, and the ministers, whether they believe it or not, dare not say they do not believe it, it seems to me that the time has not passed for speaking on the subject.

I wish now to ask your attention for a little while to the vital relation existing between the doctrine of the fall of man and the creeds.

Let me say again, for emphasis and clearness, that there is, so far as I know, so far as I can imagine, not a single doctrine in the great creeds of Christendom that would be there at all, if the fall of man being given up, the creed-makers were logical, and followed that step to its necessary logical conclusion.

Take, for example, the doctrine of the total depravity of the race; that is, that man is in the condition that the churches say he is, so that he needs what they have to offer. Of course, that is supposed to be the result of the fall.

Take again the supposed necessity of having an absolutely infallible book of revelation. If man is in a condition the nature of which he cannot possibly discover by

his own reason and experience, and if on account of that condition he needs to do something which he is not wise enough to find out, why, then, perhaps he does need an infallible book of revelation to tell him these things.

Then it has been the story of theologians for thousands of years that not only was the moral nature of man depraved by the fall, but his intellectual nature broken and disabled, so that he was incompetent to find out truth. Of course, if the fall of man is given up, that doctrine goes, too. And the competency of man, so far as his brain is concerned, to find out what kind of a world he lives in and what kind of a being he is, is conceded.

Then, again, why the necessity for that terrible, stupendous tragedy, the death of God himself at the hands of his enraged and blinded creatures? The blood atonement supposed thus to be wrought out, they tell us, is needed because man is a fallen, ruined, sinful creature. If the fall is given up, then no need of such a terrific imagining as that.

The old doctrine of conversion, that man must be miraculously changed, his old heart taken away and another one put in its place, that also naturally goes, if man is not a hater of God, but only a weak and blinded seeker after the right way. So, too, the old doctrine of salvation in the other world is no longer needed, if the fall be not an historic fact.

The point I wish to emphasize therefore is that, if the fall be given up, these things go with it. The old earth and the old heaven have passed away.

O friends, having been born as I was in that old universe, having struggled and wept and prayed through a boyhood overshadowed by the smoke of the pit as it as-

cended and blotted out the stars, it seems to me that, in coming out into this new universe, as though I had escaped from the underground caverns in which the barbaric ancestors of the race began, and had come out breathless, panting, but so glad and so thankful, into God's sunlight, where his winds of reviving blow upon my cheeks, and where I can look into the clear, serene heaven without seeing the scowling face of hate looking down upon a hopeless world.

Can you dream what it means to me to have found God's real world, to have found, in the place of the old conception of the Divine, my Father and the Father of my elder brother, Jesus of Nazareth, who teaches and helps me to love him? Can you imagine what it means?

All this, then, if the fall of man be not true, fades like a hideous dream of the night when the sun is up. We are not in that kind of world. We have not fallen. God does not hate us. God did not need to die and himself suffer torments in hell before he could forgive us for our mistakes and errors. Jesus teaches another doctrine than that in that marvellous parable of the prodigal son. All the son there needed was simply to come to the father, and tell him he was wrong; and the arms of the father were about him, and the tears of gladness falling on his neck.

That is the God of Jesus. That is the salvation of Jesus, which has been displaced and hidden away by the barbaric conceptions of the pagan world, that had no place in the thought of the loving, gentle, great prophet of Nazareth.

The world does not need to be saved in the technical, theological sense of the word; for it has never been lost. We do not need an atonement to make it possible for God to clasp in his arms his own children. We do not need any

arrogant, conceited priesthood standing door-keeper between us and the welcome of our Father, which is extended to the poorest and meanest of all his children. We do not need this whole elaborate scheme and framework that has been dreamed out and built into cathedrals and churches and institutions and creeds,— built into a power that overshadows the world and tyrannizes the brains and the souls of men. It is an impertinence, it is worse than a crime: it has no justification in the history of the world or in the justice or the loving thought of God.

What does man need? Consider the fact that he started close on the borders of the animal world, and along a pathway of dust and tears and blood has been climbing, striving, slipping, falling, struggling on his feet again, but climbing, ascending, from that far-off beginning until to-day. He has been making mistakes, and trying to rectify them; has been struggling ever to attain some fairer, finer, better thing than he has known. What does he need?

He needs first, friends, intellectual cultivation and training. He needs to see. He needs to understand. He needs to comprehend something at least, of the kind of universe in which he lives and of the kind of creature he is, the relations in which he stands, and ought to stand, to his fellow-men. He needs to be educated,— not educated in the mere sense of having facts given him, but by being evolved, unfolded, led out and up, until he gains mastery of himself and his surroundings. He needs to be morally educated, taught the distinctions between right and wrong; and taught that right, how many times ever it may be crucified, is always success, and that wrong, however much enthroned, is always failure. He needs to be taught that this universe is a moral universe to its core. He needs

to be taught that righteousness is life and peace and joy, that all good is along that line. He needs to have the worshipful, the aspirational side of his nature developed. He needs to be taught to look up, to look up with reverence, to look up with admiration; to be filled with the sense of the fineness and the beauty of those things not yet attained, so that he shall naturally and necessarily struggle after their attainment.

You know perfectly well that men gradually become wrought over into the likeness of the things they admire.

Man, then, needs to be cultivated as a worshipper; and then he needs to be trained in his spiritual nature, to have that wrought upon, developed, until there dawns upon his upward-looking vision a sense of kinship with Him who is our Father, our Mother in heaven and on earth. He needs to know that now are we all, whether we realize it or not, children of God, and that, as we look forward to some destiny so magnificent, so much beyond anything we can at present dream, it doth not yet appear, is not yet apparent, what we shall be. He needs to be thrilled with that divine longing out of which comes all the advance of the world.

This is what religion from the modern point of view proposes to do for the race; and that means creating the kingdom of God here on earth, until among men the will of God shall be done as it is in the starry heavens over our heads.

# REVELATION NATURAL AND PROGRESSIVE.

THE contest which, among the critics, the theologians, the preachers, the newspaper writers, and the people on the streets, is at present raging around the Bible, is not at all — as I understand it, at any rate — the question as to whether God has revealed himself to his children; it is only a question as to how he has done it. Is revelation supernatural, partial, confined to only a part of the people of the world and a limited portion of its time and history? and is it finished once for all and written in a book? Is revelation natural, universal, reaching all God's children, progressive, never finished, but having some new word to speak to us with every new epoch, with every new day?

The question, then, I beseech you to notice, is right in here. The critics, those who do not accept the view of revelation which is crystallized into the old creeds, are hastily, ignorantly, maliciously, called destructives. It is said they are enemies of God, and willing to take away his truth and hope from the world.

I beg you, therefore, to notice just the nature of this contest. Not, as I have said, a question as to whether God has revealed himself, but as to how, and as to whether that revelation is worthy of God and full of hope and comfort, not for some little chosen body of the elect, but for all God's children.

There is more than one way of revealing God. Placing a new fact or a new book before us in which is contained something that the world never thought of before is one way; but God is equally revealed to us afresh when we gain some new insight, when through experience we have discovered something unknown before, but which has always been a part of God's truth. By means of the telescope, one of man's most magnificent discoveries, new suns are revealed and new worlds laid bare to the thought and imagination of man. By means of the microscope the infinitely little — as marvellous to those who think as the infinitely great — is also revealed. If the eyes gain new insight and are able to interpret afresh any of the old truths, then God reveals himself anew to his children.

It is a question, then, not of taking away hope from men, it is a question of giving hope to men: it is a question dealing, I believe, with the very thought of our Father,— a question as to whether we can cherish a conception of him that we can love and reverence and adore.

Do not, then, be led astray by any one who tells you that he who dares to open his eyes and see the new light with which God is flooding the modern world is an enemy of man. Do not let any one persuade you that he is anything else than the only consistent friend of man, and the only one ready to do real honor to our Father in heaven.

With so much of preliminary, let us then reverently, but fearlessly and earnestly, confront our theme.

An old psalm-writer — we do not know who he was, and we do not know just the year in the history of the world in which he lived — says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."

It has been assumed, I was taught as a boy to believe,

it is taken for granted in nearly all the pulpits of Christendom, that, when the Psalmist wrote these words, he was referring to the Bible, and that the Bible, and only the Bible, is that word of God which is a light to the feet and a lamp to the path. But consider, friends, for one moment. When this psalm was written, there was not one single word of the New Testament in existence, and only a part of the Old. And that part of the Old Testament which had been written was not gathered into a book: it was not spoken of as one book. Each separate book that up to this time had been composed and had come to be regarded as sacred was made into a separate roll and had its own place in the synagogue. That part of the Old Testament that was in existence then at this time was simply a little library, not one book at all. So that any one referring to it would never speak of it as a book. And it was not in any exclusive sense called the word of God.

So, of course, the Psalmist, when he said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet," meant more than the truth which is contained in any book. He did not have in mind a book at all. Any word of God, no matter how uttered, no matter by what method spoken, no matter by what ear heard,— whether it come from the stars over our heads or spoken to us by the unfolding beauty of a flower,— all, whether it be the utterance of some heroic deed in the character of one of our fellow-men, whatever is an utterance of the divine truth, is a part of the word of God.

Then let us remember that, even if we should call this Bible the word of God, which in any exclusive sense we have no warrant for doing; if we should believe that at the beginning God did inspire certain men to write just these particular books, and to give them to the world without

error or flaw of any kind; if that was the nature of the book in the first place,— we have no such infallible, no such inspired copy to-day. For, remember, the oldest manuscript of any part of the New Testament, for example, which exists anywhere in the world at the present time, does not take us much nearer to Jesus than we are to-day to Chaucer.

In other words, the oldest manuscript we have takes us back to the fourth century only. What lies back of that copy? We have no assurance that the copyists were infallible or inspired; and we know to-day that there is hardly one man in ten thousand who can copy six pages of manuscript and do it with precise accuracy. We know, for example, that the manuscripts which we have of the New Testament contain thousands of various readings. These differences extend in some cases to half a chapter; in others, to three or four separate verses; in thousands of places, to phrases or words.

Suppose, then, we could know that in the first place the Bible was infallible and inspired, we know now that we have no such book. I grant you we can be about as certain of the accuracy of the wording of the New Testament as we can of the works of Cicero or Xenophon. But, mark you, that is not enough in the face of the claim that is made on behalf of this book. The destiny of our immortal souls does not hang on the accuracy of a phrase in Cicero or Xenophon. If it did, or were supposed to, then you would find the critics as exercised and anxious over these as they are over the New Testament manuscripts themselves.

Think of it, friends! Does any one, can any one, believe that the all-loving Father in heaven makes the matter of

eternal salvation of the soul hang on the accuracy of a text which is four hundred years away from the speaker's time, in an age when there was no such thing as shorthand writing heard of, no reporting, no printing; and when we know that theological bias and passion and prejudice have handled and played with these manuscripts; and when we know that the ignorance and carelessness of copyists have filled them with errors of a hundred different kinds?

I wish now, friends,—I say I wish: I do not wish, but I am under compulsion,—to consider a little the nature of this wonderful book.

I beg you to notice, and do not go astray here any of you, that I am not going to say one word against the Bible. Note, if you please, the Bible does not claim anywhere to be inspired. Some of the writers, the speakers, claim that they are proclaiming God's truth in some particular message; but they did it naturally, earnestly, as I claim this morning that I am delivering to you God's truth, that I am speaking to you some of God's words.

You will perhaps,—or, if you do not, some critic of what I am saying will,—ask me if I have overlooked a passage in the Second Epistle of Timothy, which in the old version of the New Testament reads, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." I have not overlooked it. In the first place, if you will read it in the Revised Version, read it as every scholar knows it ought to be read and has known it for years, you will find it runs in this way: "Every scripture which is given by inspiration of God is profitable." It does not say what scripture; and, as I said before, the New Testament was not gathered into a book at the time when this Epistle to Timothy was written. There was no

book, New Testament or Old, which the writer had in mind when he used the word "scripture."

Perhaps some other critic will remind me that the writer of the last book in the New Testament issues a malediction, a curse, upon any one who has the temerity to add anything to or take anything away from this book. Remember, however, he is referring only to the book which he is writing,—not to the New Testament, not to the Old Bible, which I need to say to you over and over again was not then in existence, in the sense in which we speak of it to-day. And this book, the writer of which dares to curse his fellows who have the presumption to question anything which he said, is the one book which for hundreds of years was regarded as not fit to be in the Canon by the fathers themselves; and it is the book which Luther and which Calvin as late as the sixteenth century declared had no business to be there at all.

This simply means that that saying does not apply to the Bible as we have it to-day; and, if it did, instead of being frightened at the malediction, I should question the Christian character and courtesy of him who uttered it.

The Bible, then, does not claim to be infallible, does not claim to be exceptionally inspired. No claims are made for it except such as are made for the scriptures of other people. The Chinese, the Hindus, the Brahmins, the Buddhists, the Mohammedans, the Egyptians, the Greeks, and Romans, — almost all of the ancient nations of the world, — the Norse people, have had their infallible Scriptures. And let me tell you, friends, they have precisely the same and as much reason for regarding their Scriptures as infallibly inspired as we have for so looking upon ours.

What reason is that? Nothing save the reverence which has gathered about that which is old,— nothing!

Now will you be patient with me while I consider for a little some of the characteristics of this Book? And do not think I am finding fault with it. I love it so much, friends, that it is a pain to me sometimes even to tell the truth about it, lest I be misunderstood. And pardon me for saying, as you may misjudge my attitude towards it, I never loved it as I love it to-day. When I was trained to believe that every single word in it was absolutely infallible, when I dared not use my reason about it, dared not ask any questions, bowed myself in its presence; even then I did not love it as I love it to-day. Grand, inspiring, magnificent, one of the most wonderful books of the world! Some of us are compelled into an attitude that is misunderstood as antagonistic merely because we are anxious that the world should know the truth, and should read freely and fearlessly that larger book of God which includes the truth of the Bible, but which runs over it on every side, and which has always been being written, and is being written to-day, and will be being written forevermore.

What have we here then, friends? Take the Bible in your hand, and look at it. Why is it bound in one volume? For no reason in the world except a bookmaker's reason and the reason of public convenience. It is not one book: it is sixty-six little books or pamphlets; and they were written during a period covering something like a thousand years.

And who wrote them? Concerning three-fourths — I speak roughly, without having counted — of these books, we have to notice that they are purely anonymous. No one in the world is wise enough to know who wrote them.

Concerning the most of them, no one knows with any particular accuracy when they were written.

Concerning the most of them, nobody knows where they were written.

Now, friends, let me give you an illustration.

Suppose a book should be made up of the choicest culling of English literature. Begin with "Piers Ploughman"; include in it the old English ideas as to the origin of the world; include in it scraps of lore, bits of verse, fragments of the sayings of the sages; let there be history, let there be poetry, let there be all kinds of literary productions in it; and let it extend from "Piers Ploughman," down to Kipling. And then bind these all in one book; and you would have a book made up very like the Old Testament, very like the New,— a large number of little pamphlets bound in one, covering a long period of time, representing different ideas.

Read with your eyes open, friends; and you will see that the Hebrews started as a polytheistic, man-sacrificing race, where all barbaric people started, with the crudest ideas of the world and of God and of man. And they grew and developed as other people have grown and developed; and their morals and their religion climbed as their civilization climbed, until from these ignorant barbarians you have the magnificent — still barbaric, however — kingdom of Solomon. You have the utterances of the second Isaiah, some of the grandest utterances of the world; you have the magnificent mountain summit of the Nazarene; you have all the spiritual teachings of the New Testament. But perfectly natural, human growth that can be traced along every step, from the beginning to the last point that it has reached.

This is what we have when we face this wonderful old book. And is it unnatural, is it strange, that we should find in it the traces of its origin, the finger-marks of the people who composed it and for whom it was composed? Ought we to expect to find it infallible? Ought we to expect to find it historically or scientifically accurate? Ought we to be surprised that one writer contradicts the teaching of another? For only the most violent and blinded partisanship of the men who hold briefs for particular cases which they are bound to defend can question for an instant that there are different theories of morals, different theories of history, different theories of science, different theories of ethics and religion in the Book.

The Book of Ecclesiastes, for instance, was written by an atheist and an infidel,— an infidel, at any rate, if not an atheist, who teaches in the most forcible way that there is no future life, and that the best we can do is to get all we can out of this one and not worry about anything else. This is not entirely in accord with the New Testament! Precisely similar things hold good in every department of the Bible's teaching.

Now I wish you to note one or two points a little further.

In the first place the Bible is full of historical inaccuracy. I cannot go into details this morning or point them out and explain them: it is not meet. Nobody doubts it except those who are blindly determined to uphold a particular theory concerning the Book. You need only to read it with a little care to find it out. And it is just what we should expect. Not only that, but take it in the domain of natural knowledge. There is no scientific knowledge of this universe displayed by any of the Bible writers. Why should there be? There was no such knowledge then in the world.

The order of creation as outlined in the first chapters of Genesis has been proved over and over and over again not to be the order in which the world was created and not the story which science tells to-day.

And, friends, do remember that when you are reading the record that God himself has left on the earth, that he has made, you are reading God's word. When you are reading what some very ignorant people two or three thousand years ago thought of it, anonymous people, too, people concerning whose opportunities for knowledge we know nothing whatever, are you going to place those opinions in competition with that which God is saying to us right here to-day in language absolutely unmistakable?

The old Hebrews had no better ideas about God, not much better ideas about the heavens and the earth, the stars and the moons, than many other people of their time. They teach us distinctly and definitely that the earth is a flat surface fixed in the midst of surrounding waters, that the sky is a dome overhead as real and as solid as the metallic cover of a dining platter. There is not a point where they commit themselves to any opinion about the heavens or the earth, not one where they are not wrong.

Then let us note the ethical teachings of the Old Testament. I shrink from speaking here; but I must. My task demands it of me. The Old Testament upholds polygamy; it defends human slavery; it teaches the doctrine of retaliation; it teaches and indorses moral ideas which I shrink from speaking of here. It calls David a man after God's own heart. And this David all his life long was a man of treachery and blood; and the very last word he spoke was to command his son and successor to see to it that one of his

old generals did not die a natural death, but went down with bloody hairs to the grave.

Is that the ethics of Jesus, of him who said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do?" Can you get the two ethical ideas into any sort of vital relationship to each other?

Do you know that there is a place in the Old Testament where God directly commands the indiscriminate slaughter of all the men, all the married women, and all the children of a particular city, and directs that the young women shall be distributed among the brutal soldiers? Is that the ethics of him who stooped down and wrote on the ground, while the woman who was a sinner was brought into his presence, and at whose rebuke those who had accused her silently slunk away and said no more?

Friends, the ethics of many parts of the Old Testament are simply barbarian ethics, such as you would expect to find among barbarians, but not the ethics of the civilized world to-day. I have not time to go into any longer detail.

Then the religion of the Old Testament, the first part of the Old Testament, the conception of God, God's nature, God's character, is it the same, friends, as the religion of the New Testament or the highest and grandest religion of the world to-day? God comes down in human body, as they tell such tales of Jupiter, walks around in the garden: he comes to Abraham, sits down and eats with him; and yet the Bible tells us "no man hath seen God at any time." Note the naïve, beautiful, child-world fairy story, but grotesque for an infallible book, of that scripture which tells of God hearing one day in heaven a rumor that men were really building a tower in the plain of Shinar which was to reach

up to his sky; and he says, Let us go down, and see if it is so.

Is that the God who knows the secrets of every heart? Can we believe that this is our God who is represented as being pleased when he smelled the smoke of burning flesh, the sacrifice of Noah after the flood? Can we believe that he is the God of Jesus, a Spirit to be worshipped in spirit and in truth?

Why, friends, it is so plain that an intelligent scholar is almost ashamed to argue about it,— that the Bible outlines the pilgrimage of man from his lowest barbaric condition clear on and up to Jesus, a course that it took thousands of years to travel. And the Bible is marked with the characteristics of every step of the way. Why should it not be?

And note, friends, that the Bible never says one word to contradict anything which I am saying. It rather proclaims it on every page.

What is it that I am antagonizing? What is it that I am criticising? It is the utterly baseless claims of the most fallible, prejudiced, ignorant kind of men,— that is all. I cannot accept a theory which certain people used to hold concerning the Book; but I accept the Book with all my heart, and love it, and thank God for it every day I live.

Do not dare, then, any of you, to misunderstand me! Do not dare to misrepresent me, and say that I am criticising or opposing the Bible! I am only criticising and opposing men's claims concerning the Bible which have no foundation in history, no foundation in reason, are simply baseless traditions,— nothing else and nothing more.

Another thing let me say. Some day, friends, I am going to preach you a positive sermon about the Bible, why I love

it, and what it means and what it is. I cannot preach two sermons this morning; and so I must pass that by.

I wish now to ask your careful, reverent consideration of two points vital to this whole discussion.

The Bible, the oldest book in it, takes us back only to about eight hundred years before Christ. Up to that time there were traditions and fragments, parts of books perhaps, which reached back possibly five hundred years earlier. But now note, according to the teaching of all the great popular churches, the people who have lived on this earth, and have never had any revelation from God, have been pouring a ceaseless, hissing stream of souls into the pit of eternal torture.

Can you believe, do you dare, looking God in the face, to believe that he created his children and made them live here, wandering over this little planet of ours for two or three hundred thousand years, and the minute they died sent them to eternal torture, and had never sent to them one single word of guidance or warning? Dare you believe it? And they will say in the next breath that God is good and a Father!

That is what I was taught as a child, is what is taught in every one of the great authoritative creeds of Christendom to-day; and I challenge the clergy of the United States, if they do not believe these things, to be men, and stand up and demand that they be taken out of the creeds.

Not only that, but according to the common theory, God gave his word only to Abraham and his descendants, a little people inhabiting a country on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, the whole of which is not larger than the State of Massachusetts. Until about two thousand years ago God had never sent any word of revelation except to

that little narrow strip on the Mediterranean shore. And though he is almighty and all-wise and all-good, and has been presumably trying for the last two thousand years to get this revelation known to the rest of the world, there is not more than a third part of the population of the earth that have ever heard of it.

Can you believe that? Can you believe it, and then say "Our Father who art in heaven"?

O friends, let us turn now at the end, and note what a conception of the word of God, of the revelation of his truth, so much more magnificent, so much more honorable to God, so much more hopeful to man than this,— as much so as the dawn of the morning is beyond the light of flitting fireflies in a field at night,— we hold. God the Father of all his children from the very earliest time, away back and down for hundreds of thousands of years when the first barbaric man, half-animal, half-human, climbed upon his feet, and looked up with a dawning wonder in his eyes at the stars, and said, "Who made all these?"

From that time do you not think that God, who made him, was with him, holding him by the hand and leading him? If we have a child sick, crippled, incompetent, mentally inferior, do we not spend the larger part of our care upon him, and leave the others to look after themselves?

Do we not believe that God is somewhere near a thousandth part as good as we are? Do you believe that God had left his children wandering, stumbling, without any light, radiating his truth on one little tiny people, radiating darkness everywhere else from the beginning of the world until now?

I believe, friends, that man has been spelling out some little letter or word or message of the divine revelation,

making out some word of God from the very beginning of the world until to-day, and that each one in any nation anywhere has been able to read enough to help him take the next step in that eternal search of the human soul for the Father soul which is the essence of all true religion.

The universe is only the living expression of God's life, God's thought, God's power. Whether we know it or not, we face him, whichever way we turn. It is God's word that we are studying, God's revelation we are reading, when we find out about these wonderful bodies of ours, and learn some, at least, of the secrets of health. It needed no divine revelation to teach man the difference between food and poison. He could find out by trying; and he did. It is experience that has taught us in this direction; and we have read only a small part of this marvellous book of the human body as yet, made so cunningly. And, as we read each new word, it is a new word of God.

We are following his footsteps: we are learning the lessons of how to live. For, note, the only thing we need in this world is to know how to live, how to come into right relations with God.

So you take it in the industrial world. Read that marvellous history of man's discoveries, of man's inventions, and note that every step man has taken there has been simply reading some new word of God. We talk about this "nature" as though it had no God in it and as though we did our great things ourselves.

Note what a ship-master does when he wants to sail across the Atlantic. How much can he do without God? He goes into the woods with metal which he has discovered, which God made, all the conditions and powers and forces of which are divine, and cuts down trees which he brings

into his ship-yard. He raises the hull, builds it upon ways that slope down into the sea. When it is finished, he asks God's power of gravity to push it out into the ocean for him. There God's waters take it in their arms. They hold it up. He lifts the masts, spreads his sails upon them; and then he puts himself into right relation with God's eternal forces, and God's winds blow the ship across the sea. Or God's steam down in the hold, used so as to work upon a cunning machine which he has invented by observing the system of God's law in that respect, pushes his ship over the sea.

Whatever way we turn, we are dealing first hand with God: we are, as Kepler said, reading over his thoughts after him. And every advance step is only through reading a little more of this eternal, universal, progressive revelation of the Divine.

And, when you come into the moral sphere, did man need any supernatural, unnatural revelation to teach him the Ten Commandments, to teach him the law of ethics? Do you know, if I had time this morning, I could trace you the very beginning and birth of morals down into the love of man and woman, into the birth of the child, into the beginning of human society.

Men learned, easily enough, that, if they were to live together in society at all, murder must be prohibited; if they were to own anything, theft must not be allowed. So you may trace every similar conception of the world as plainly, as naturally, necessarily, sprung out of human experience, born of these social relations of ours, none the less God's truth,— more God's truth, assuredly, because truth is more than speculation written in a book.

Concerning the birth of moral ideas: you travel all over

this world, you go one mile above the sea anywhere or at any particular level, and you do not find precisely the same growths of tree and shrub and flower. But you do find similar growths. So you come to any definite level of the advance of human society. You do not find the same moral ideas; but you find similar moral ideas. There is hardly an ethical idea in the New Testament that is original with the New Testament. The Sermon on the Mount was hundreds of years older than Jesus. Before Jesus was born, Hillel had said all the law is summed up in these two commandments: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself.

All these ethical ideas sprung up out of human experience as the result of the growth of human society. And so men's ideas about God in every nation began in barbarism, men making God in their own image; and they are not through with that process yet. Higher, finer, nobler conceptions of God, as men have grown higher and finer with nobler ability to think and feel!

And so, friends, I present you, in contrast with this limited, this partial, this supernatural conception of revelation, this other one,— natural, universal, unlimited, embracing every child of the Father; and progressive, advancing step by step with the eternal progress of man.

What has been the result of these fallible human conceptions that have been held about the Bible? These theories have kindled martyr fires: they have riveted chains upon the wrists of men and upon brain and heart. These theories have given birth to bigotry, to hatred, to animosities, to self-conceit, to self-righteousness.

The other makes us able to say, indeed, the one God, Father of all his children. It makes us humble, it makes

us glad, it makes us hopeful. It thrills us, it lifts us up and leads us on.

And so, friends, I bid you, sucking as the bee does from the flower all the honey, the sweetness, the truth, the beauty, there is in this wonderful old book, not neglecting it, not leaving it one side, to remember that there are other flowers, and that God's world, and, yes, God's universe, is his garden, and that sweetness and truth and light may be found everywhere.

Do not look back to find your God. Look up to find him. Look on for him. I thank him for every word he spoke a thousand years, two thousand, ten thousand years ago. I thank him for the word he spoke to me this morning out of the gray sky. I thank him for the brighter word which he speaks out of the sunlight. And I look with wide-open eyes, expecting to see some new word of his revelation: I listen to catch the latest whisper that comes down out of his loving heart, out of his brooding sky; and so I wait and watch and reverence and love him to-day and evermore.

# IS GOD INCARNATE IN ONE MAN ONLY OR IN HUMANITY?

I SHRINK from the treatment of my theme this morning more than I have from that of any other in this entire series. Not because I have any hesitancy in expressing my opinion or because I feel any doubt concerning the magnificent truths involved, but because, considering the state of the public mind, it is so easy to be misunderstood, so easy to be misrepresented, so easy to find some one who thinks that, in attempting to state the real truth, or what I believe to be the real truth, about Jesus, I am criticising him or derogating somewhat from the dignity of his position or the beauty of his character.

I beseech you, therefore, give me impartial and patient hearing, and make up your mind as to what my position is only when I am completely through.

Perhaps I may be pardoned for recalling to your minds the fact that I preached as a minister of Trinitarian churches for eight years. I was trained, lovingly, reverently, worshipfully, in the old thought about Jesus; and yet never, even in those days, did I occupy such a position of loving reverence towards the Nazarene as I occupy now. I never reverenced him so, I never found him such inspiration, such uplifting, such guidance, such help. He is closer to me a thousand-fold now than he was in the days of old.

So much as to the point of view from which I am to speak.

Now, at the outset, I wish to put clearly before you, if I may, the precise question which we are to discuss. It is not as to whether God incarnates himself in man, but as to whether he did incarnate himself once, and once only, in one man belonging to one race at one period in the history of the world, and as to whether his divine incarnation is limited to that. Or, on the other hand, has he always incarnated himself? Is incarnation a universal, a progressive fact? Did he really make men and women in his own image, so like him that he is always at home in their brains, in their hearts, in their lives? Is humanity God's child, his real divinely begotten child? and is he progressively incarnating himself in the race?

I wish now to ask your attention for a moment to the actual state of thought of the people in whose minds the ordinary old doctrine of the incarnation sprang up, so that you may see the world for a moment, if possible, as they saw it, comprehend the problem as it presented itself to them.

You must forget, then, all modern discoveries; you must forget all the magnificent reach of our knowledge of this great universe; you must picture this earth as a little flat affair, heaven just above the blue dome, God an outlined being sitting there on a throne. You must think of this world as something apart from God, something that he made, as a carpenter builds a house. Put it before you so that nature and natural law and the working of natural forces are something entirely external to God, that he controls the world from a distance, that he can interfere with the working of it if he pleases, and so produce what is called a miracle.

You must think of God as a being apart, quite re-

moved from his world,—what Carlyle used to refer to as an "absentee God." You must think, then, of this gulf between humanity and God, and of the necessity that lay in the minds of the people who first dreamed out this special form of the doctrine of incarnation that somehow the gulf between humanity and God must be bridged. And there was only one way in that kind of universe to bridge it,—by miracle, by creating a being who should be neither man nor God, but partly both, or wholly both, if you choose; an incomprehensible being that should bridge over and so unite these separate lives, God on the one hand, the world of men on the other.

This was the problem that was in the minds of the people when this doctrine of incarnation sprang up.

Now I wish to note for a little while the beliefs of the disciples, the belief of Jesus himself as to his own nature, so far as it is recorded, and then note how naturally, how inevitably, the ordinary doctrine of the incarnation grew. Then I shall ask you to note what seems to me so unspeakably grander than that, a doctrine that does not deny that, mind you,—a doctrine that affirms a thousand-fold more than it denies, that includes all the divinity there was in the Son of Mary, and includes unspeakably more.

Suppose this were entirely a new idea to us, and we were seeking to find what ground there is for holding it. Of course, we should say, There is no ground whatever except what we can find in this book. And of course we must say, to be perfectly fair and honest with ourselves, that, whatever we may find to be the beliefs of the writers of these books, we are not absolutely obliged to agree with them.

Does it seem strange to you, for example, to say this? I am intensely interested, if I may, to find out what Paul

thought; but the world is nearly two thousand years older than it was then, and there has been an expanding of knowledge and discovery in every direction so great as to be almost immeasurable. Is it strange, then, that I should not feel obliged to agree with Paul in his opinions on every subject? I know he was wrong in any number of directions. I know at the same time that he was one of the grandest and most heroic men, and one to whom we owe an unspeakable debt.

But let us see what doctrine is really taught concerning the person, the character, the office, of Jesus.

Who is our first witness? Paul. For you must note — and it will throw a great deal of light on the teaching of the New Testament, if you remember it — that the first writer in the New Testament, the one that stands nearest to Jesus in point of time, is the apostle Paul. His Epistles were written before either of the Gospels came into its present shape.

Now does Paul teach that Jesus is identical with the God who created the universe? Nothing of the sort. So far as any record appears, Paul has never heard anything about the miraculous conception: he nowhere refers to it. It would have given him tremendous power in his preaching if he had known it and believed it, and could have proclaimed it; but he nowhere alludes to it.

But note right here, in passing,— for I shall not have time to go into it at any length,— suppose Paul had believed that Jesus was miraculously born. There are thousands of people who take it for granted that that is the same thing as proving that Jesus is divine. If God is to work a miracle, and a child is to be born without a human father, would that prove that the child is anything more than human?

Suppose he had wrought a similar miracle in the animal realm, a miracle anywhere, so that there should be special and miraculous generation and birth: it would prove nothing as to the nature and character of the creature so born. This simply in passing.

Paul teaches that Jesus was the second Adam, the head of the new order of a spiritual humanity. He teaches, if you please, that he was supernatural, that he was pre-existent; that he was sent into this world to perform a special mission, to save mankind. But that does not prove at all that he was the equal of the Father.

Suppose he was "the first-born of every creature." Note the word "creature." Suppose he was created before an angel had ever lived. Suppose he had spent what is practically an eternity in close communion with the Father. Suppose he had been the head and leader of all the angels. That does not make him God.

Mathematicians tell us that you may pile up numbers year after year, and make the largest statement you can in figures, and that, when you are done, you have not even begun to approach infinity. There is an infinite remove between the infinite itself and anything finite.

Paul does not teach any doctrine, then, of the Godhead of Jesus,— nothing of the kind to be found in him.

Then he says that, at the end Jesus is to deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and God is to be all and in all.

Now let us turn and see what Jesus is reported to have said about himself. Of course, friends, you must understand I cannot quote passage after passage. I will make these general statements; and you can take up your New Testament when you are at home, and study it, read it over and see if what I say is not true.

Jesus is nowhere even reported to have claimed to be God, in any word which the scholarship of the world is agreed in regarding as his authentic utterance. Always it is "the Father." He prays to the Father, he depends on the Father. When he claims to exercise any special power, he says, This power is conferred on me by the Father. Then, when it comes to the matter of being able to lay down his life and take it up again, he says, This is the gift of the Father. Everything, all the way through, is a recognition of the fact that he is the son of the Father, comes as the Father's messenger to declare the Father's word and execute the Father's will. That which he speaks, he says, he speaks not of himself: he speaks that which the Father has commissioned him to say. He does not claim even anything approaching superhuman knowledge. When the disciples asked him a certain question, he says, I do not know: only the Father knows that. And, when some of them ascribe to him special goodness, he says, Why do you call me good? there is none good but one, that is God. His goodness was derived, reflected from the Father.

In that passage which I referred to, I think, once before this winter, that is frequently quoted, where Jesus is represented as saying, "I and my Father are one," he says in the immediate context that the disciples are capable of being one with him and the Father as he is one with the Father. So you see it proves too much if we depend upon that passage. You can find none anywhere in which Jesus does not frankly recognize the fact that he is the son of the Father, having committed to him a special work, engaged in this divine service for his fellow-men. And, when you turn from the words that are put into the lips of the Nazarene himself to the testimony of the other disciples, what do you find?

I have already referred to Paul for the simple reason that his testimony comes first. What do the other disciples say? Nowhere, friends, is there any clear testimony even to their belief that Jesus was other than a nature derived from God and having committed to him a special service to be rendered here among men.

Let me hasten to speak of one case because it is the extremest that any one can suggest. I am aware of the word in the prologue in the Gospel that is called "According to John," where it says, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," and this Word was with God, etc.

Now let me suggest to you one thing. We do not know who the author of this Gospel may be, we do not know the value of his opinion if we could cross-question his testimony to-day; but we do know this,—that at about the time this Gospel appeared there was in vogue throughout the early Church a system of philosophy called "Gnosticism," from a Greek word which means "to know." They were the people who claimed to know — the opposites of the agnostics of our time. These people say they do not know: the gnostics said they did.

The Gospel of John bears many traces of this gnostic philosophy. It has in it some of the technical terms of this philosophy, which show that the writer was familiar with it; as the use of the phrase "survival of the fittest" in any book would show to future ages that the writer was familiar with the philosophy of Evolution.

Now what did these gnostics believe? They believed that God was a spirit, of an infinite remove from matter. They believed that all matter was evil, essentially and necessarily. They believed, therefore, that the infinite God could not, being perfect purity, have anything to do with matter. So,

when the gnostics would have the world created, they declared that it was not the work of the primal, infinite Deity, but the work of a demiurge,— a sort of deputy, sub-deity,— somebody appointed by him as his agent to create the world.

So, if you should find in a gnostic fragment of writing the statement that Jesus was the creator of the world, that would be proof beyond question that the man who wrote it did not believe that he was God, because, as I said, it was a cardinal doctrine of the gnostics that God was not the world creator.

So, when you find this doctrine in the early part of the Gospel of John, along with gnostic phrases in a book subject to gnostic influences, you are to interpret it in the light of the prevailing ideas of the time.

You find nowhere, then,— I must content myself with this general statement,— nowhere in the New Testament any doctrine of the absolute deity of Jesus.

Neander, the famous German historian of the Church, may be presumed to know what he was saying, and his testimony is without bias in this direction, for he was thoroughly orthodox in his belief; but he makes the frank admission that the doctrine of the Trinity was not one of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Church, as is plainly evidenced, he said, from the fact that it is nowhere explicitly taught in any part of the New Testament.

This is the testimony of the orthodox and scholarly historian, Neander.

Now, then, let us pass to the belief of the Fathers of the Church. We find ourselves in the second century, between the years 100 and 200. What do we find there? Lactantius, Tertullian, Origen,— man after man of those whose names are familiar as the representative Fathers of the

second century of the Church,— you find them, without exception, teaching the doctrine of the derived and subordinate nature of Jesus. Justin Martyr, one of the most famous of them all, goes so far as explicitly to say that our Lord Jesus had his own Lord, God the Father, who had created him, and to whom he was subordinate.

Tertullian, a man passionate, fiery, not specially scholarly, is the first one of the Fathers who suggested the doctrine of the Trinity; and he himself testifies that it was a surprise and a shock to everybody at that time.

The doctrine of the Trinity in such form as to declare that Jesus was of the same nature as God did not take shape, as I had occasion to tell you a few Sundays ago, until the year 325, at the Council at Nice, where it was propounded and championed by Athanasius. It was only in the year 381 that the Emperor Theodosius packed a council, only one hundred and fifty bishops, chiefly selected by himself, to declare what has come to be recognized now as the doctrine of the Trinity. He had violently driven all the bishops and ecclesiastics who did not hold this doctrine out of the Eastern Church, and then he called this council, selected by himself, to legalize what he had already done.

Saint Augustine is the first one of the Fathers who teaches in perfectly clear fashion, and consistently, the doctrine concerning the person of Jesus which is now held in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the ordinary Protestant formulas. And he himself says that he had not seen the matter clearly until he had discovered the doctrine of the Logos in some Platonic writing.

It can be traced,— the growth of this idea, as a pagan idea, and not as one that was taught in the Gospels, or the New

Testament, or that was natural to the disciples or to Jesus himself. For the Jewish mind always looked upon this idea with abhorrence as blasphemy; and the gospel has never found any acceptance among the Jewish people, and for that very reason.

Now, friends, if,— and I wish you to note the importance of this suggestion,— if nowhere else in the history of the world had there been any claim made that any human being was supernaturally born or was an incarnation of God, then it would indeed be very, very striking that such a claim should have been made on the part of the Church, and for the person of Jesus of Nazareth. But what are the facts?

Why, when I study early church history, the only thing that surprises me is that it took three hundred and twenty-five years for the doctrine to grow. I wonder that it did not appear earlier. For, as we look back and trace the thoughts of men concerning questions like these, what do we find?

We find that among barbaric people in nearly all the pagan nations of the world the idea of God appearing in flesh has been one of the very commonest from the first. And he has not confined himself to men. He has appeared in fishes; he has appeared in the form of birds; he has appeared in the form of almost every kind of animal, if we are to believe the testimony of those who claim to represent this type of religion or that. Note, for example, that the number of incarnations of God have been almost countless; and some of the stories told in regard to the supernatural birth, the marvels of the infancy, of the childhood, are so strikingly similar to those that are told about Jesus that it is almost impossible for us to believe that they had a separate origin.

There have been no end of appearances of the Buddha;

and still they are to come. Whenever the world goes very wrong, degenerates, plunging down into evil, then, according to the belief of the Oriental nations, God is to come and rescue and lift up his world again, and bring it back to himself.

And, as I had occasion to tell you the other day, among the Roman people as well as among the Greeks, the doctrine of apotheosis, of either the gods coming down in the form of men or men being lifted up to share the conditions of the gods, was the commonest of all beliefs.

Read the poems of Homer, the great poem of the Latin race, the Æneid of Virgil, and you will find that the gods were forever appearing in the form of men, having human passions, engaging in human conflicts, and deciding human battles. And these ideas, I say, are as natural as the growth of a blade of grass in the park in the month of May.

Shall we wonder, then, that the loving admiration that gathered around the person and work of Jesus should take this form? Shall we wonder that philosophical speculation should at last result in this doctrine in its attempt to bridge over the gulf between God and his human world? I say the marvel of it is not that the doctrine grew up, but that it was so long in growing.

Now then, friends, I wish to suggest one or two thoughts concerning the implications of this old doctrine,— not the doctrine that I am going to present to you in a moment.

You know the doctrine of the exclusive incarnation of God in Jesus is a part of a hopeless and a terribly unjust scheme of the world. The pity, the love, the tenderness, of Jesus, have been dwelt upon in all ages. And, if he were a man, a divine man, then the pity and the tenderness and the love are something superb and grand.

But think a moment, friends. I can only hint it, turn a flash-light on the darkness for a moment. Let us look at this matter of the divine mercy. What is the doctrine? God created a world that did not ask to be created. He, omnipotent and all-wise, created the world; and he launched it forth in space, and then either did not wish to or was not able to prevent its falling into the hands of the Devil almost immediately. And then he left that world swinging on its darkened way for two or three hundred thousand years, and all the people dropping off of it one after another into the abyss, with no light, not a word of hope, no sign of pity, no salvation, until by and by, late, after thousands on thousands of years, he comes and gives a whisper of his revelation to one little people, and then four thousand years later comes down in his own person to save the world, save a few people, save the elect.

Is that to be held up to us as typical of divine mercy?

Let me give you an illustration. Suppose a shipmaster here in New York should send, starting for Liverpool across the Atlantic, a ship freighted and filled with passengers that he knew would go down before it was half-way over. And then, after it was out of sight of land, he should send a ship to the rescue, that should get there just in time to save one in fifty of the passengers while the rest were hopelessly engulfed.

Which would you do? Would you praise a man like that for his mercy, or would you think of what would be the unspeakable infamy of the first launching of the ship for such a doom?

Mind you, I am not attacking the work of God. I am attacking unjust, infamous representations of what God is said to have done, but which he never did.

That doctrine of Jesus is not a part of a scheme of divine and tender mercy, if you judge it from the point of view of the Westminster Confession. It is something unspeakably horrible, too cruel to be put into words. Then, if that be true, the coming of Jesus as God into the world has been the most lamentable failure that human history has ever known. God himself trying to save the world, omnipotent, all-wise! and, since he came down two thousand years ago, he has been at work as hard as he could, presumably, to save men! And, as I told you the other day, not a third part of the people on this little planet have ever heard anything of it. And the most of those, the most intelligent of those who have heard it, do not believe a word of it. If he did it, he has not given enough evidence of it, so that the people who are seeking earnestly for the truth can find it. If that be true, it is the most lamentable failure that the history of the world has ever known.

But, on the other theory,—Jesus a man, a divine man, our brother, born like us, to die like us, to search and seek and trust and pray to God like us, and give himself to the service of his kind like us,—then it is one of the unparalleled successes of the world, infinitely full of its story of divine tenderness and mercy, as I shall show you in a moment.

One other point I wish to call your attention to before I come to my own positive statement.

Consider the problem for a moment. Suppose God,—and I am talking in this free way now from the point of view of the old ideas,—a God that works outside of things, and rules them as he pleases,—suppose God should attempt to put as much as he could of himself into a man. What would be the result? Consider carefully, think earnestly!

Could he produce, as the result of an effort like that, anything else, anything other, anything more than a perfect man? If he broke over the limits anywhere, this being would cease to be human, would he not?

If God should fill a man with himself, the result would be simply a perfect man. He could do no more: he could do no other. How, for example, would anybody be able to prove that a man walking this aisle was God? Suppose John, the beloved disciple, should appear to us to-day, and should make affidavit, signed with his own name before a notary, that he believed that Jesus was God. How could he prove it? What evidence could he give that he was anything more than a man, or that this opinion of his was anything other than his personal opinion?

If somebody should come to us to-day, and say that he really believed that such and such a person was God, incarnate in any supernatural and miraculous sense, is there one of us who could believe it or pay any attention to such a statement? Why, then, should we pay any attention to similar statements, because they are two thousand years old, and were made by people we know nothing about?

Think of it, friends, for a moment, and see where you are, on the basis of an honest, reasonable attempt to find the truth.

Now, friends, let me come and state what I believe to be the magnificent, inclusive, universal, progressive reality. And I need here now at the outset of this part of my theme to call your attention to the universe as we know it to-day. I pictured the old universe out of the old doctrine of the world. I want you to note the new universe which is the field and scene of the new revelation of God. I want you to

think how modern it is. We are apt, without thinking much about it, to project our ideas away back into an indefinite past. Why, it is only within two or three hundred years that we have begun to have glimpses of this wonderful universe in which is now our home,—only two or three hundred years! And a large part of the revelation of God has come to us during your lifetime and mine. Do you know how modern it is, and what is this modern thought?

The universe is no longer a piece of mechanism away from God — nature governed by natural forces and in accordance with natural law, while over here somewhere is a supernatural and divine world entirely separated from it! That idea, friends, is utterly gone from the minds of intelligent men and women.

What is the universe? Note first the significance of the word I am using. In ancient times they believed in any number of antagonistic forces, confused and working against each other. Now, we know, from the dust under our feet to the light just starting from some star on its thirty millions of years of journey — we know that this is a *uni*verse, not a multitudinous manifestation of antagonistic forces, no dual thing,— a universe. One law, one life!

And we know that the old antagonism between matter and spirit is fading away. Pursue a particle of matter, and you find yourself lost in invisible and intangible force, which is what we call spirit. No one can tell where one leaves off and the other begins. It is one manifestation of the divine, — matter and spirit, too.

And matter is no longer something impure. It is something perfect, divine in all its parts and fragments. It is a universe, then. It is one substance. We know now that this which we call matter is seen in the glittering stars over

our head and the roadway that we trample under our feet. It is one substance; and we know that all these various elements that we talk about are coming to be considered by the deepest thinkers as modifications of one substance. We know that all the forces about which we speak have been demonstrated to be only modifications of one force. And we know that life is one life, only one life in the universe, and that life God; and there is one humanity. Not variety of races,— one humanity, one family, one child of God. So we have found out at last. And this is unquestioned revelation, the word of God spoken to us in demonstrably clear and unmistakable tones.

Herbert Spencer says,— and I wish you to note the mighty significance of it,— he says it is the last and deepest and highest word of science that the power, the force, which is manifested in the universe outside of us, is the same force precisely as that which wells up in ourselves under the form of consciousness,— one God, one life, one substance, one God and Father of us all!

This is the kind of universe we are in to-day. And note, friends, that gulf between a spiritual God and an unspiritual matter that the early Church tried to bridge,— and the old unused and unusable bridge is left still in the creeds,— that gulf is not there, there is no such gulf. There is no separation by so much as a millionth part of the width of a hair between God and his children.

You know what I believe, friends,— I believe it has been demonstrated beyond question, by scientific revelations of the modern world: I believe in the divinity of man and the humanity of God. I do not believe there is any difference in kind between our souls and the world's soul.

Even Dr. Lyman Abbott has dared to say that he be-

lieves there is no difference in kind between God and Jesus and man. He says that God is man plus infinity, and man is God minus infinity. I believe this is magnificently true.

Now see what the upshot of it is, a grand doctrine of incarnation that we are compelled to hold to-day and in the coming time. Let us look, if you will, at a pebble stone in the street. That could not exist one instant but for the present vital life of God. And God is incarnate in that stone; that is, that stone contains just as much of the divine life and power and wisdom as, being a stone, it is capable of holding.

Take a crystal. Here you have a beautiful organization which you do not find in the pebble. The crystal, again, is an incarnation of God, holding just as much of the divine wisdom and force and love and beauty as, being a crystal, it is capable of holding.

Come next to vegetable life, the first form, a grass-blade, that you will notice on your walk home after service this morning. That grass-blade is God incarnate: there is just as much of God in the blade of grass as the blade of grass is capable of holding and expressing. More of it in the rose, merely because the rose is capable of holding more,— the fragrance, the poetry of God.

Then, when you come higher yet, to the amœba, one of the lowest forms of animal life, there is sensation and movement, the germ of that which is in us. There again is God incarnate, just as much of God as the amœba is capable of holding and expressing.

And, as you climb up, following through the fishes, the reptiles, the birds, the animals, and up to man, each in its degree is a divine incarnation, holding and manifesting

just as much of God as it is capable of containing and showing forth.

Now let us note, if you will, a few illustrations to emphasize this magnificent truth, from the different departments of our human life.

We look at Jesus; and we see in him the glory of God, the divine speaking on his lips, ministering with his hands, going on errands of goodness in his feet, shining out of his eyes. We say that is divine. But are we to follow the example of the creed-makers, and draw a distinction without a difference, and say that precisely similar things in other lives, in other nations, in other ages, are only natural, only human, not divine?

For example, we say the golden rule is divine as it fell from the lips of Jesus. What was it, pray, when it fell from the lips of Confucius four hundred years before? Was it only human, was it wicked, was it wrong, was it just natural? Is the same idea, the same thought, the same love, in China undivine, and only divine in Palestine?

Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself: on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." We say, Divine, wonderful, glorious! Was it less divine when Hillel said it before Jesus was born, in almost precisely the same words?

We read in the New Testament; and our hearts are touched, and they grow tender with the thought of the comforting, heavenly Father who shall "wipe away all tears from their eyes." Divine, surpassingly beautiful! But was it not divine in ancient Egypt before Moses was born, the identical thought and saying, and almost the identical words, dreamed by some noble Egyptian and put into the lips of his God, who shall wipe away all tears from their eyes?

Was it divine to see Jesus hang upon the cross, and say, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do," and then bravely, with however much of human shrinking, to meet death for his truth? Divine! I say, friends, one of the divinest, grandest scenes in all the history of the world. But, mark you, if Jesus was consciously God, the God of this universe, then that scene is theatrical, spectacular, unreal. Could God, who came on purpose to do it, shrink like man from a little pain? Should we think it less wonderful that he was great and wise if he was a man, believing in his great truth, consecrating himself to his Father and our Father and for our sakes, if he was ready to stand by that truth through scourging, being outcast, maltreated in every way, if he stood to it before the judgment-seat of Pilate, and when he was spit upon and the thorns placed on his head; and, if a man fainting under his cross, he went out to that hill outside of the city, faithful unto death, trusting in God even when the doubt swept over him for a moment as to whether he had been deserted? Then I say it was one of the divinest, most magnificent scenes in all the history of this world.

But, if he was not a man, this pity, this glory, this wonder, all change into tinsel and unreality. Could such things be difficult and marvellous for a God?

Thousands of men, for the sake of their love for and belief in a cause, have met death as bravely as he did; have met more cruel deaths,—deaths prolonged through unspeakably greater torture; met it gladly, met it bravely, without flinching or fearing.

Is it divine in him, not divine in them?

I can only catch at illustrations here and there in dealing with so wide a theme.

Take the matter of what we call sacred and profane history. The history of the Jews, they tell us, is sacred history. The history of America, which has done unspeakably more for the deliverance of man from bondage than did the history of the Jews,— this perforce is profane! Why, is there no God in the history of America from the time the Pilgrims, under the inspiration of that grand old John Robinson, sailed for Massachusetts, down through the heroes of the Revolution to our Lincoln and the thousands of men that gave themselves for the land?

Is this sacrifice, this devotion to God,— is this all natural or human, no God in it, nothing divine about it?

Take Lincoln, a magnanimity not surpassed by the tenderness and forgiveness of Jesus himself; a consecration not matched, I can almost say, in the history of the world; tenderness, love, devotion to truth, faithfulness unto death! Is there no God in Lincoln, nothing divine in Lincoln?

I believe, friends,— I do not brush it one side,— I believe God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. I believe God was in Socrates, reconciling the world; in the Buddha. I believe he was in Confucius, reconciling the world unto himself. I believe he has been in all the great line of witnesses and martyrs, the true, faithful men in every age of the world, in any religion, under every sky, who have consecrated themselves to the truth and given themselves to the love and service of their fellow-men. I believe that God has been progressively incarnating himself in his child, man, from the very beginning; and that to-day, wherever you look upon honesty, wherever you look upon faithfulness, wherever you look upon pity, human help and human kindness and human care, there you are standing face to face with God himself.

Humanity is divine. God is living in humanity, unfolding himself in the growing and expanding life of this wonderful race of ours.

And I believe that we are entitled to look forward; and, as we dream of the coming time when the beauty and the glory of the world shall appear, we can say, in the words of Tennyson: —

"For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be;

. . . . . .

"Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were furled
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world."

And, seeing God in that future, we can add: —

"Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range.
Let the great world spin forever" *up* "the ringing grooves of change!"

So we will look for the time when the light and the love and the goodness of God shall be in all the earth, and evil shall have been outgrown, and men shall live here, looking trustingly to the sweet heavens above them, and drinking in the divine air around them, and looking upon death only as another birth by which they enter into a grander and higher life. Then we shall be on the road towards the complete incarnation of God in his one child, man.

# THE DIVINE FATHERHOOD AND OUR HUMAN CHILDHOOD.

If you study the lines of human advance from the beginning until to-day, you will note that one of the most difficult things — if we are to judge by the results — has been the attainment of any worthy thought of God, the attainment and the keeping of any noble idea of the Deity.

This is natural when you remember that God is infinite, and that we can think him only according to the degree of our development. We cannot comprehend infinity: we can think God only as we are able to think him, and he is to us, in his influence upon us, what we think him.

The barbaric man had, of necessity, a barbaric God; for men have always created God, or their thought of him, in their own likeness. So, as man has become more civilized, tender, noble, the ideal of God that has been worshipped has grown more elevated, been purified from earthly and human elements of passion and change.

But you will note that it is a necessity growing out of these facts which I have stated that the organized thoughts of God, so to speak,— those which have become crystallized in creeds and institutions — are always no better than the average thought of the time. They are more likely to be the thought of the past: they are never the highest and finest thoughts of the noblest representatives of the age. You cannot get organized into an institution anything above,

beyond, better, than the average; and generally, as I said, all organizations and institutions represent phases of thought that are being outgrown.

In other words, the best things in any department of human life are always in the air,—the highest, finest intuitions of the noblest and most developed souls; so that the thoughts of God which have become crystallized in creeds, and around which organizations have been formed, are rarely the worthiest and noblest ideals of the Divine.

Read the Old Testament, if you will, or the New as well, and you will find that there is a progression in the ideas of God. He becomes spiritualized, ennobled, purified, less like the old-time men who first began to talk and think about him. Difficult, then, let us remember, is it for us to frame and keep worthy thoughts of God.

Among the earliest of those that have ever entered into the dreams of the race is figured forth by the word "Father." I would not have you to understand that Jesus originated the idea or first taught the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. It is one of the oldest in the history of the world. As I had occasion a few Sundays ago to intimate to you, one of the first names given to God in India, before perhaps any part of our Bible was written, was Heaven-Father. Because God is called Father in any particular age in the history of the world, you are not of necessity to suppose that they had the same conception of him that Jesus had when he uttered the word "Father"; for we put into words what we are capable of thinking and making them contain.

The word "God" in different parts of the world does not of necessity mean the same thing. It means something barbaric, jealous, revengeful, cruel in one age or among one

people. It means all that Jesus could dream of the divine Fatherhood in another age and among another people.

The Father, then, is the highest and finest thought, it seems to me, that we can frame of God. But at the present time, perhaps as never before in the history of the world, there are certain difficulties that stand in the way of our making the Fatherhood of God mean anything real to us.

There are three special difficulties which I wish to note and put one side, so far as I may be able to in a word.

Modern science has revealed to us such a conception of nature as the world has never known before. This is no little world, with God close by, in the old sense of the term. We are in the presence of what seems to us material infinity. We can think neither beginning nor end, neither length nor breadth nor height nor depth nor limit anywhere. And this nature, they tell us, is without heart, without any feeling. It is a great machine, rolling on like a Juggernaut, crushing whoever and whatever gets under its wheels. It is simply an infinite power, but with no thought in it, no care, no tenderness, no love.

This is the conception of nature which many hold as the result of the scientific studies which they have pursued.

Not only that. They say that the existence of evil, of pain and of cruelty,—that these things demonstrate that there is no Fatherhood to be found, at any rate in the natural world.

Tennyson sings sadly to us of "Nature, red in tooth and claw with ravine." They tell us that pain is everywhere, heart-ache and heart-break and sorrow of every kind.

How, then, in the face of these facts can we believe in any Fatherhood? And, then, the Church, to which we ought to be able, if anywhere, to fly for relief, has only made the

difficulty more for us; for will you note this fact: that, though the ministers, the priests, the ecclesiastics, talk to us constantly about God as our Father, the emphasis is never laid on the Fatherhood. There is not a theological scheme in existence, the centre of which is Fatherhood, which has been developed from the idea of Fatherhood.

It is always God as king, despot, governor, and we his subjects. We are under his law, which must be maintained. There is a justice that has to be appeased. There are always those standing between us and God. They say we must believe this doctrine which they have invented before we can come to him; we must perform certain rites before we can be accepted; we must come through some mediator or another. They tell us there is no direct and immediate access of the child-soul to the Father-soul, either in heaven or on earth.

Here, then, are these three difficulties. What shall we do with them? The sermon might be devoted to either one of them alone. I can, however, devote only a fragment of it to them altogether, because simply to establish the idea that we have a right to call God our Father is not the purpose I have in mind, but to treat some phases of belief in the light thrown on them by the ideal of Fatherhood

So let me note these objections in just a few brief words, not answering all your questions concerning them, but merely hinting the direction in which I believe we could find an answer if I had the time and this was the place.

Take this great fact of nature, a machine. Is it a machine? Is there any God in it? When they talk about nature, and say there is no heart, no life, no feeling in it, they have left out you and me. Humanity is a part of nature; and it is the crown, the outcome, the highest, finest

part, in which, if anywhere, we may expect nature to find its fruitage and its purpose. And here in humanity is personality, thought, love, tenderness, pity, fatherhood, motherhood,— all the sweetest and highest things we can dream.

These are a part of nature; and no one has any right to speak of nature with these left out.

And, then, they talk of the uniformity of nature, as though it militated against the ideal of the divine Fatherhood. If there were not uniformity, it would be disastrous to the thought of Fatherhood; for there could be no study, there could be no learning anything, there could be no human experience, there could be no building up of character, unless we knew the forces and the methods with which we have to deal.

And, then, note, in a word, the uniformity of natural law does not necessarily mean mechanism at all. It only means what the old seer said, that "God is without variableness or shadow of turning." If God does the wisest and best thing in certain conditions, then, when those conditions repeat themselves, he must do the same, or else a poorer and less wise thing.

The uniformity of natural law, then, does not mean a force that God cannot or does not choose to break through: it means simply the wise and perfect and loving method of God's constant working.

Then, as I had occasion some Sundays ago to tell you, in regard to pain, suffering, evil, death: these do not militate against the loving Fatherhood of God. Pain is a token of his goodness and his care,— all the necessary pain. Moral evil is a condition of moral growth and development. Death is simply an open gateway by which we enter into a larger and higher life; and the dissatisfactions of this

present period of our growth are only a prophecy and promise of a grander, an unfolding capacity, meaning only that we are not yet all that we are capable of being.

Along these lines, if I had time, I think I could demonstrate that none of these things are inconsistent with the pity, the tenderness, and the love of God.

Let us put them one side, then, this morning, while we consider for a little while two or three phases of this sonship as it works itself out in our practical attitude towards God as our Father.

And, in the first place, what is our access to God? Can we come to him directly, without the intervention of any church, any priesthood, any ceremony, any mediator of any kind? Is that true, is God just our Father and we his children, folded close in his arms, whispering into his ear, and a way to him always open to our wandering feet? What shall we say of this phase of the divine Fatherhood as related to us, his children?

There have been in the history of the growth of religion, not only among us, but among other peoples as well, two tendencies, diverse, antagonistic. There is always — what I will call for clearness — the priestly type of thought, and there is always the prophetic type of thought; and the priestly and the prophetic are almost always in antagonism to each other.

The priest is he who loves the laws, the forms, the ceremonies, the organizations. And he emphasizes these, and often makes them, not means of approach to God, but barriers in the way of that approach, unless we make our terms with the priest who controls these things.

There are always these tendencies in the religions of the world. If you go back, for example, to the Greeks and

Romans, you learn that the cult for a long period of time, the ceremony, was everything. It made no matter what the character of the worshipper was,— no one asked whether he was a good man. It made no matter what he thought or believed. He might believe anything he pleased; but he must come to the priest in the prescribed way, bring the offerings and perform the ceremonies, or else there was no way by which he could find access to his God. It was specified in the most minute way. The priest must wear a particular gown, he must use a particular kind of knife in slaying the sacrifice. The sacrifice must be just this particular thing, and nothing else. The altar must be built in a peculiar way. The priest must stand facing a certain point of the compass; and a part of the time he must stand on one foot. He must turn around in a certain order; he must pronounce the formulas and perform the ceremony with accuracy. He must go through all this ritual before the worshipper could approach the Deity. And, if he made a mistake in it, however inadvertent, the whole thing was vitiated, the God was angry, and there was no acceptance.

This is only an exaggerated illustration of what has been true in the whole history of the world. Study the growth of the old Hebrew religion. There you must bring your sacrifices in a particular way, at a particular time. You must go through the whole ceremony and ritual law, or else there was no possibility of acceptance on the part of Jehovah. These from the priestly point of view.

But ever and anon there came the voice of the prophet, speaking the authorized word, as he claimed, from the Father, and denouncing this whole type of religious life and supposed religious service, saying: If I were hungry, I would not tell Thee. The cattle on a thousand hills are

mine. What do I care for your pouring out your rivers of blood and your barrels of oil? Instead of all this what I want is the child heart. I want love, I want truth in the inward parts, I want sincerity of life.

This, the intimate, immediate relationship of the child with the Father, is what was asserted by all the old prophets. Then, when we come to the new era, was it not this, and this alone, which was taught us by every authentic word of our elder brother, the Nazarene? Nowhere in any authentic teaching of his is there any doctrine of mediation,—none,—not even with him as mediator.

Look at that parable of the Prodigal Son, which I read this morning, as throwing light on this problem. Does God ask the prodigal to come to him in the name of or through the merits of the son who had stayed at home? Is there any priestly intervention? Is there any ceremony required, any sacrifice, anything?

Nothing, absolutely nothing, between the infinite tenderness of the father heart and the yearning of the needy heart of the child.

And yet, when the Church that claimed to stand in the name of the Nazarene had organized itself, it had placed a hundred barriers between the immediate contact of the child-soul and the Father-soul,—ceremony, ritual, money, prayers, priestly intervention, all sorts of things it put in the way. And for the larger part of the last seventeen hundred years the great popular churches that have claimed to speak for God and for his Son, Jesus, have taught another doctrine than that which Jesus himself taught, a different doctrine from that which helps us to believe in the immediate love and guidance of the Father who is in heaven and on earth.

And to-day — let me give you one single illustration — there is going on a prolonged and scholarly controversy between the archbishops and the bishops of the Anglican Church and the pope of the Church at Rome — over what? Over the validity of orders, over the question as to whether the Anglican bishops and archbishops and priests have any power — for what? Why, they have arrogated to themselves the power of God himself. They are discussing the question — while we are expected to wait until their dialectics have settled the dispute — as to which church, Rome or England, has the right to tell us whether we can come to God or enter heaven or not.

Unless God has been transmitted by the physical contact of ordained priests from the time of Jesus himself without a break anywhere; unless they have power magically to change the bread and wine into the body and blood of God; unless they have power to forgive sins; unless they have power by touching with their moistened fingers the brow of a child to convert the babe — born of the devil, as they believe — and give it a new nature; unless they have power to work miracles,— there is no salvation for any of us. For they are the only ones who are authorized to save men; and they are now fighting over the question as to which one it is.

And we are to wait and find out. We cannot come to God unless either an Anglican or a Roman priest takes our toll at the gate, and shows us the way. And we do not know which of them has the right! They are not agreed themselves as to the matter!

This is an illustration, I say, of how the Church has thrust itself between the child-soul and the Father-soul in heaven, and presumes to arrogate to itself the power, the tenderness, the love, the forgiveness, of our Father.

I tell you, friends, there is no more dangerous thing in the religious life of the world to-day than that which, presuming to speak for God, tells the world, and makes thousands believe it, that we cannot come to the Father except by a creed, by a ceremony, by a ritual, by a sacrament, by the permission of a priest. False, impious in every part is such a claim!

No church has any rights or powers except humbly to point the way, open all gates, throw down all barriers, and proclaim the universal and eternal truth that God is ready ever to fold every one of his children close to his Father's heart,— readier, Jesus tells us, than we are to be folded; readier to give us all the good things — his life, his spirit, his eternal love and care — than we are to take them.

That is the doctrine of the Fatherhood as touching this matter of our access to God.

One other phase of belief needs to be looked at in the light of this great truth. That is the doctrine of forgiveness. I have been speaking of merely the matter of open access to God, as to whether we can come to him freely and personally on our own account and simply because we are his needy children.

Now what shall we believe of his forgiveness? It is popularly said of us liberals that we preach a loose doctrine of forgiveness; that, just because we believe in the eternal, loving Fatherhood of God, we think it does not make any difference what a man does, he is doomed anyway to be saved,— it is only a little time, more or less, that must elapse; that is all.

This, I say, is what is said of us. But, friends, we are the only ones, I believe, who teach the hard doctrine, the severe doctrine. If I may sin as much as I please until I

am sixty or seventy years old, and then by the touch of the priestly hands and the administration of consecrated oil I may be forgiven, the past wiped out, and the gate of paradise flung wide open for me; if I may live as I please, and then on my death-bed repent by feeling badly, and by tears and prayer wipe out the past and start afresh on an equality with the best in heaven itself; if I may secure all this by committing my soul to the care of a priest as a guide, claiming a fee for his services,— these are the easy ways of being saved.

But no; while with one breath I proclaim to you the infinite, tender, eternal Fatherhood of God, I proclaim to you, in the next, that there is no such thing as forgiveness in this universe, in the sense of suddenly or miraculously wiping out the past.

One of the most dangerous doctrines, one of the most immoral doctrines, that can possibly be proclaimed, is that which deludes people with the idea that they can live any life they please,— sensual, cruel, dishonest, unkind, deceitful,— and then, by any process, suddenly wipe the soul clean again. It cannot be done!

I break one of God's laws; and the result remains. God cannot help it unless he can contradict himself; for these forces that determine the results of action are God in operation, God working, the changeless, the eternal God. God does not need to forgive us in the sense of feeling like a loving father towards us. He always forgives us in that sense; but, if I break a physical law, the penalty follows,— not arbitrary punishment, but the natural and necessary result. If I break a moral law, the penalty follows, the result just the same.

I stamp my foot on this platform, and it is felt in the sun.

I think, I feel, I speak, I act, and I have set into activity causes that make the life of the world other than they would have been; and I can never trace those forces or obliterate those results.

Every law that you break, friends, entails its natural and necessary result of evil. You may, indeed, work out your redemption, your deliverance. You may make your mistakes and faults stepping-stones on which to climb to higher things; but that which you have done is done, the record is forever and forever, and the results, until they are worked out into good, continue and remain irretrievably as evil.

If you injure another, that injury remains until you make restitution. If you have been the means of another person's going astray, and that person causes a third to go astray, and so a long line of evil is started, you may never be able to reach to the end of it or to discover how far it has gone. Forgiving you, taking you in arms of love and mercy, does not stop that process.

Do not be careless, then, in dealing with these problems of right and wrong under the idea that you can be forgiven in that sense, merely because God is a loving Father. God is a loving Father; and, because he is a loving Father, he will compel you to work out your own salvation through the suffering of the natural and necessary result of every word you speak, every thought you think, every act you perform.

That is the only way by which you can build yourself up into noble and fine and high character again.

Now, what time there is left, I must dwell, altogether too inadequately, on another phase of this question of Fatherhood, of approach to God, that which might well take an entire discourse,— the problem of prayer. Is there any use

in this great universe, of which we are a part to-day, in our praying? Can we pray? Is it reasonable to pray? Can we produce any effects by our prayer?

I must only suggest a few things; and perhaps you will be able to think them out along the line suggested for yourselves.

There are several phases of prayer which are absolutely gone and can never be recovered again. Our forefathers believed that they could produce rain for their thirsty crops as the result of prayer. They believed that they could cure disease by prayer. They believed that they could work all sorts of miracles, changes in the order of the world, by prayer.

If I believed I could interfere with the order of this universe by praying, I should never dare to open my lips in prayer again. It is because I believe in the perfect order of the universe of God that I do pray, and that I believe in prayer,— not only as much as, but more than, I ever did in my life. Only, mark you, certain discriminating definitions!

To illustrate one phase of this matter, let me refer to a conversation I had some years ago with a lady in the West. She was troubled over this question of prayer. I was beginning to be troubled over certain phases of it myself. But that which troubled me was my belief in the wisdom and goodness of God, not the opposite. I said to her as we were discussing the matter, "What would you think of me if I should come to you, and plead with you, and beg you to be kind to your own children,— to give them something to eat, to give them clothes to wear, to treat them kindly and lovingly?" I said, "What should you think of me if I should beg you and plead with you to be a good mother?" She said, "I should feel insulted." I said, "Of course, you would." And then I asked: "Don't you think God is almost

as good as you are? Do you think we need to tell him over and over again what he knows a good deal better than we do? Do you think we need to argue and plead with him, as though, if we could only influence him to do something, we might have our will? Do you think it is wise for us to beg God to be good, to talk as though, if we could only rouse him to activity, something might be done?"

I have been in prayer-meetings in the old days a hundred times when the praying seemed to me impious and profane, only they did not mean it so. They were talking as though, if God were only as much interested in the welfare of souls as they were, they could get him started to do something about it.

Does that kind of prayer seem to you right and wise to-day?

Nay, friends, I do not believe there is any use in teasing God, in begging God. I do not believe I can change his purposes or plans. I do not believe I can make him wiser than he is already, kinder than he is already.

Is there any use of praying, then? Sometimes it is said that, if you leave all that element of prayer out, that it becomes only a sort of spiritual gymnastics, producing a certain effect on us, but nothing that might not be accomplished in another way.

Let me illustrate, if I may, in a word, one phase of my belief on this great subject. I believe, in the first place, that the more we love God and the more we trust him, the less we shall ask for things, the more we shall simply commune with him. Communion of the child-soul with the Father-soul is the essence and most important thing, as I believe, in prayer.

But do we accomplish anything in the spiritual realm by prayer? I believe we do. And let me hint by an illus-

tration what I mean and how it may be possible: I have a plant, say, that seems to need something to make it grow. It is pining as if it lacked air or sunshine. I am keeping it in my room. Now I wish to produce certain definite and very vital results in that plant. I take the plant out into the sunshine. I take it where it will have the dews and the rain, and where the free airs of heaven will blow around it. I do not change the dew or the rain, or the air or the sunshine; but I make my plant live, which would have died otherwise. I change the vital relationship between my plant and the sun and these eternal forces that are concerned in its life and unfolding.

And so, by my prayer, I do not change God any,—I do not wish to change him any; but I may vitally change the relation between my soul and his changeless and eternal love. And so I find life, I find health, where there was weakness and decay. I find strength, I find comfort, because I have changed the relation between my soul and the soul of my Father.

It seems to me that right in here is the essence, the one most important thing touching the meaning and import of prayer. As we get more spiritual, as we trust our Father more, we shall grow less and less to ask for things; and at the same time, perhaps, we shall grow less and less critical in our use of words.

I sometimes wonder whether in public prayer I am not giving utterance to phrases which I should not approve of if I looked at them critically. I try not to do it; but yet, the older I get, the less care I have on this subject.

My little boy comes and climbs up over my knees, and pours out his child nature in my ears, tells me all sorts of extravagant and foolish things he would like to have and do. Do I criticise him as to the use of his English? Do

I care very much what words he uses? I am not going to give him, even if he cries for it, what I believe would be to his harm. I am going to love him against his will and against his wish and wisdom, if need be; but I am going to let him tell me his stories, and let him pour out his soul into mine, and I will clasp him close to my heart, whether he is wise or whether he is good, or whether he is the opposite.

This is the essence, it seems to me, of Fatherhood. Let us, then, not make much of public prayer. Did you ever notice that, if you followed strictly the teaching of Jesus, you would never pray in public at all? If people were as careful to obey his words in these directions as they tell us they ought to in others, public prayer would cease, once for all. Jesus says, "Go into your closet, and shut the door, when you pray, and pray to the Father which is in secret."

Learn to feel and act as though he were close beside you, watching over you, guiding you. This is the essence of prayer.

Let us, then, friends, as we study the theological teachings of the world, the conceptions of God that are given us to worship and follow,—let us bring them to the test of this idea of Fatherhood. If they will not stand that test, you may be sure they are wrong. And remember that God is not only Father, but he is as good and tender and sweet in his Fatherhood at least as we are.

Remember those words of Jesus where he appeals to the fatherhood of the people who are listening to him. Would you treat your children so? If a child asks bread, will you give him a stone? If he asks fish, will you give him a serpent? If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good things to your children, how much more shall the Father give good things to them that ask him!

# IMMORTALITY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE MODERN WORLD.

It seems to me a matter of immense importance to prove, if we can, to demonstrate, that death is not the end of personal conscious existence. We may hope, we may dream, we may cling to this faith lovingly, tenderly; but it is something else for us to be able to say we know.

Why is it important? Does it change anything? It seems to me that it changes certain things in the most important of all conceivable ways.

If I am going to live fifty years, I would certainly lay out my life on a different scale than might be perfectly appropriate if I were to live only six months or one year. If, when I get through with this little scene of affairs on this visible earth and under this visible sky, I get through for good and all, then there are a thousand things that it would not seem to me at any rate worth while to attempt to do or to become.

If a man with his friends is going out on an excursion to camp in the woods for a few weeks, he does not consider it of any great importance that he build himself a substantial house that would stand for five hundred years. If a young man is going through Columbia University, and if he knows that he is to die and that is to be the end of it on the day that he graduates, will he feel stimulated to study, to make himself master of all those things that otherwise he might strive to acquire? Would you blame him any if he

tried simply to have a pleasant time during those four years? He need not injure any one, he need not lead what we would call an immoral life; but, certainly, you would not think him culpable for not bending all his energies to the acquirement of knowledge that was to be of no practical use to him whatever!

But, if the graduation day is not the end, but only the beginning of a long career, then would he not feel that it was worth while to brace himself physically, mentally, morally, to acquire self-mastery, to learn all those things which will make him mighty in shaping his future life among his fellow-men?

So, if I have before me an immortal career, that is one thing.

I wish you to note, friends, that, whether we have or not, the essential principles of morality, of right and wrong, are not changed. If we should wake up on a floating raft at sea, knowing that our lives were to extend no more than twenty-four hours, even then it would not be right for us to injure each other, and make our position more uncomfortable than it need to be. But, if men are not to live in the future, I do not believe that your grandest moral ideals are going to have leverage power enough to lift them out of their selfishness, and make them lead grand, magnificent, consecrated lives.

I know that George Eliot sings her wondrous song of the choir invisible, and tells us how grand a thing it is to live for the coming generations here on earth, though she herself held and cherished no belief in an immortal career beyond. But tell me why, friends! If a man says to me, looking me straight in the face, Why should I sacrifice myself for the sake of another man whose happiness is no

more important to the universe than my own, what can I say to him?

It seems to me that if I believed that when I died that was the end, I should try not to injure anybody. I should indeed work hard, perhaps, to make the lives of my fellow-men a little easier, to lessen the amount of pain and suffering in the world. But I should certainly not think it worth while strenuously to endeavor to build up in me a spiritual nature that can find scant room for exercise here. I do not see how any one could find fault with me so long as I injured no one, but tried to help on the common happiness, if I made the aim of my life the seeking of happiness,— happiness in innocence, harmlessness to others.

But, if I believe that the day of my death is the day of my graduation, that I am just beginning to live then, that this life is only a college course by way of preparation for the next,— if I believe that with my whole soul, then nothing else becomes of any great importance.

You remember that significant word of Browning's in the introduction to his poem of "Sordello," where he says, "The culture of a soul; little else is of any value." If I am a soul, and if my soul begins its career at death, then indeed it is true,— and I can look the world in the face and preach it with all my power,— it is indeed true that little else is of value.

What difference does it make whether you are very rich in this world or not? What difference does it make whether you live on one of the finest avenues or on a more common street? What difference does it make what kind of clothing you wear? What difference does it make what office you hold or what social position you enjoy? These things are all well in their places; but, if you really believe

the other thing with your whole soul, then the main purpose of your life — and it is the only rational thing — will be devoted to what you can become and to what you can achieve for others. Then indeed those words of Jesus gain magnificent significance: He that saveth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for the truth, for God, is the only one who saves it.

You see, then, that knowledge on this subject has a tremendous bearing on the kind of life we should lead here. I believe indeed — I suggest this in passing — that there is nothing like demonstrated knowledge here so well fitted to help us solve the great social and industrial problems of the world. The masses of men in Europe and America are saying, You have been trying through all the ages to put us off by telling us that we ought to be content in that position in which Providence has placed us, and look for our reward in another world. And they are beginning to say: We doubt about that other world: it looks like a device on the part of the comfortable, with the assistance of the priests, to keep us quiet; and we do not propose to be fooled by it any longer. We wish our share of the only good about which we really know anything.

And can you blame them? I cannot.

But, if I can look these men in the faces, and say, I know and you know that you are souls, that you are to live forever, then I can say to them also: Do you not see that it is only reasonable that you should go through this world in such a way as to start with all the advantage possible over there? Do you not see that these men who have the money and the social position have what is relatively of no importance whatever? You have God and the immortal life,— all that is capable of making wealthy a soul, a child of the Infinite.

So I say, look at it however I will, it seems to me of immense importance that we should be able, if we may, to demonstrate continued existence.

I ask you now to look over the face of the world with me for a little, and see where we are as touching this matter of belief concerning a future life.

I use the word "future" in connection with this life. Let us remember, however, that it is not future except as related to us who are speaking. If our friends who have passed over are alive at all, they are alive now in the same natural sense as we are, and under the same universe and beneath the guidance of the same Father that we are.

What is the condition, then, of the modern world as to this matter of belief in continued existence? There are, I know, vast numbers of people in all the churches who have taken this belief for granted. It has come to them from the past as a tradition. They have said, There must have been adequate reason for the belief when it first took possession of the hearts of men; and they have not been troubled by any manner of doubt.

Blessed, in one way, at least, are these souls that are untroubled. I would not speak one word that should touch the beautiful fabric of their belief. I would not undermine their trust: I would help them to maintain it as long as they may. But I am compelled to recognize the fact that only a small part of the people to-day are thus contented and satisfied. There are those in our old churches — and this is another class from the one I have just been speaking of — who have accepted this belief as a tradition, who have not questioned it, but who, when the great strain of sorrow comes, find that the cables which are attached to the anchors of their hope down in the deep sea give way; and they find themselves adrift and in doubt.

I had, for example, not a great while ago a letter from a lady only two or three years married, looking with hope and joy towards the future, whose husband suddenly was snatched out of her arms by death. And she wrote me — I had never seen her — and said: "I have for years been a member of one of the old churches. I supposed I believed; but now, when this great trial comes, everything is gone." As I read the letter, I could hear the tears drip from the first word to the last. And she wrote: Tell me, do you believe, is there any reason for trust in God? May I hope for a future life? I have written you, and not gone to my own minister, because from the position which you occupy I know you would tell me just what you think, not what you think you ought to think. If I go to my own minister, I am afraid he will tell me what he thinks the Church will expect him to say.

So, when these great tests come, so frequently the faith gives way.

I attended the funeral of the wife of one of my old friends in Boston this last week. The wife's father was there from a distant city. The relation between the daughter and father had been peculiarly close and strong. He whispered in my ear just as soon as the service was over that he wished he could believe. He said, "I have been trained in the old church; but I find my faith growing very dim as I get older."

And it seems to me that most men, as they get on into middle life, find this trust getting unreal to them; and they wish they knew.

Only a little while ago a novel was published and widely read. One of its characters was an Episcopal rector and another an old gentleman, his long-time friend, with whom and others he had been accustomed to play a quiet game

of whist of an evening. The old gentleman is dying, and he sends for his rector; and, when he comes, he looks into his face, and says: Now I want to ask you a question; and I want you to answer me as man to man. Do not give me your official opinion. As a man and a friend, do you know anything about it? And, so adjured, he says, No, I do not.

I instance these cases simply to show that so many times, when this traditionally and generally accepted faith is put to the test, it gives way.

You find, on the other hand, some who have given it up. Harriet Martineau used to say, as she grew older, that she did not care for any future life: I am tired. All I want is rest. I do not desire any future life. She did not care to have it proved to her. I have had the same thing said to me in the course of my life a great many times. But I have replied: —

You are mistaken, if you say this, in interpreting your own state of mind. You are not tired of living. You are tired of carrying burdens. You are tired of certain conditions that are hard, and from which you have not been able to escape. You are heart-hungry, you are weary: you are not tired of living. And so I say concerning this state of mind, as Tennyson says in "The Two Voices": —

> "Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
> No life that breathes with human breath
> Has ever truly longed for death.
>
> "'Tis life whereof our nerves are scant,
> O life, not death, for which we pant;
> More life, and fuller, that I want."

Another class of thinkers at the present time are those that call themselves agnostics. If you go back a little ways,

two or three hundred years, you come to a time when the people thought that they knew more about the other world than they did about this one even. Read Dante. He maps out the Inferno and the Paradiso as no geographer could map this planet; and they all believed that it was real,— they lived in the other world. The strongest men of the age believed so thoroughly that everything else gave way in view of preparation for that which was to come after death.

But there came the Renaissance, which was a sort of re-awakening to the life of this present world. Out of that sprung the scientific spirit; and out of that has grown the agnostic.

What is the scientific spirit? Is there any evil about it? No. It is nothing more nor less than the reasonable demand on the part of reasonable men and women that they should have proof for that which is presented to them for acceptance.

Mr. Huxley went so far as to say that he believed it was immoral for people to believe without any proof. A doubt is as sacred as faith, and the only object of either of them is to lead to the discovery of truth.

The scientific man, then, is no enemy to the future life: he simply wishes what I wish,— to know.

They used to sing, you know, about making their "title clear to mansions in the skies"; and it was lovely, so long as people could believe that the titles were clear. But, when the scientific investigators asked leave to look into these titles and see if they were valid, the most of them were found not to bear a very close or careful investigation.

So people woke up, and were obliged to confess that they did not know so much about the other world as they had supposed. So here is this agnostic position.

I have never met an agnostic who was glad to be one,—not if he was a sensible man at the same time. He simply says: I must confine myself to that which is true. I must know: I cannot rest in simply what is called "faith," which is shutting the eyes and believing in the dark. I wish evidence for these great things that we are told are founded in the eternal nature of the universe.

Now let us look for a moment at still another class. We come to those that are ready to argue with us to-day that we have adequate reason for believing in continued existence simply on the basis of the story that Jesus, after being crucified, was raised again from the grave, in the same body which he wore when he was on the cross. This is offered to the world to-day. I have seen two or three times, several times within the last week or two, the argument made that here is the Gibraltar of Christianity, here is the one reason for our believing in continued existence.

I wish, as carefully as I may, to look at this for a little, and see how much it means. You are not to suppose that I am done with it when I have treated this point with which I am immediately concerned. I shall wish to refer to it a little later on.

I say then, friends, frankly to you that, even if I believed that the physical body of Jesus was raised from the tomb, I should fail utterly to see how it carried any hope or adequate comfort for me.

Take it on the old theory that Jesus was God. If God continues to live through what is ordinarily called the fact of death, how does it prove that I am to continue to live, when I am not God? If a physical body is raised from the grave, how does that prove that I am to continue to live when I have no sort of expectation that my physical body

is ever to be raised? I cannot see the vital link of connection that is supposed to make this belief valid.

And, then, I must say to you with perfect frankness that I do not regard the evidence that is offered to us in behalf of the contention that the physical body of Jesus was raised from the dead as valid in any way whatsoever. We have not even one first-hand witness of such an occurrence. Paul tells us that he saw Jesus; but he does not claim to have seen him in the body,—it was a vision after his supposed ascension. We have no first-hand testimony.

And, then, I wish you to note another thing. A story like that never could have grown up in the modern world. When heaven was supposed to be just above this arch of blue, and when an atmosphere that any man could breathe was supposed to fill the space between where the throne of God is and this earth, then it is conceivable that a body might pass up through this atmosphere, and enter into that abode. But, when we know now that anything constituted as we are cannot possibly live for five minutes after it has passed beyond a certain distance in the sky; and, when we know that there is no heaven with the throne of God, on the right hand of which any one could sit down, just above this dome of blue; when we know it would take light thousands of years to reach the centre of the universe, if there be any centre,—which no man knows,—do you not see that a conception like that cannot reasonably live for five minutes in this universe where we find our home?

We must dismiss that, then, it seems to me, as the basis for our belief in continued existence after the experience of death.

And yet, in spite of agnostics, in spite of all the clear-headed and earnest-hearted criticism of the modern world,

in spite of the doubt that is everywhere in the air, the human heart still pleads for its dead, still longs for some hope that those that have been loved shall not be forever lost. And, in the face of these critics, we find men like Oliver Wendell Holmes uttering his passionate remonstrance: —

> "Is this the whole sad story of creation,
> Lived by its breathing myriads o'er and o'er,—
> One glimpse of day, then black annihilation,—
> A sunlit passage to a sunless shore?
>
> "Give back our faith, ye mystery-solving lynxes!
> Robe us once more in heaven-aspiring creeds!
> Happier was dreaming Egypt with her Sphinxes,
> The stony convent with its cross and beads!"

I sympathize with and my whole heart leaps in response to this plea of our beloved poet Holmes, all but the last part of it, which I utterly repudiate. Would it be better to have faith in a future life with the Sphinxes and the civilization of ancient Egypt? Would it be better to have faith in a future life with the convents of the Middle Ages and the cold and hard creeds? Nay, friends!

I do not know whether you will say Amen to this utterance of mine or not, but I must say it with all the fervor of my soul: If I could have an immortal heaven, with all I love, ever have loved, ever shall love, grouped around me there, and have it at the price of the eternal loss and wail of the poorest, meanest soul that ever lived, I would turn my back on it, and go gladly to sleep in eternal night.

I have no respect for that man who is willing to take heaven for himself at the price of hell for anything that ever lived. I do not say, then, better the dreaming Egypt

of the Sphinxes, better the stony convent with its cross and beads. No belief at all is better than a belief that God is heartless and cruel, and that the smoke of the torment of the great majority is to ascend and cloud the fair heavens for ever and ever.

But that is not the alternative, as I believe.

Let us see, then, where we are. Now I do not propose at first to offer you what I regard as proof. I only propose to outline for you two or three considerations which seem to me to establish a tremendous, a magnificent probability in that direction.

And, first, it seems to me one of the most striking facts in the history of this world that practically all men everywhere have believed. No matter what their reason for believing, the simple fact that they have cherished a belief,—is it not wonderful?

Here is a body from which the life has departed. It looks, friends, does it not, as though it were all over? Whence, then, springs that audacious, that magnificent trust that there was something in this body, or connected with it, that is able to overleap that black and apparently bottomless abyss, and start on its endless career of light on the other side?

If you should see a dog bent pensively over the body of one of his fellow-dogs, and you could know he was asking the question: If a dog die, shall he live again?—you would think you were in the presence of something unspeakably strange, wonderful.

The simple fact, then, that men have dared to dream of a future life seems to me marvellous in its significance; and I am inclined to believe that trust everywhere connected with love and hope in human souls comes from a whisper of our

Father in heaven. I believe that it means something very grand and full of cheer and peace.

Another thought. When modern science first began to gain its wondrous development in the world, there was for a long time the feeling and fear that some theory of materialism would ultimately gain dominance, and control the beliefs of men.

But, note, it is not the Church, it is not religion, that has killed materialism: it is fearless study that has killed it. Materialism, as philosophy and science to-day, is antiquated and dead. It has no standing among the finest and most scholarly thinkers of the world.

There is no possibility out of any combination you please of dead matter of producing a thought, feeling, love, or hope. And the simple fact, then, that we place man, soul, first, and matter afterwards, seems to me to have a tremendous significance in this direction.

Spenser, the old poet, the author of the "Faery Queen," is the author also of two lines suggestive in this direction. He says,—

> "For of the soul the body form doth take;
> For soul is form, and doth the body make."

I believe life is first. Life creates and shapes what we call matter,—without knowing anything about what matter really is.

One other consideration: This universe, just as far as we are able to trace it, we find to be a reasonable universe. So we are compelled to believe that rationality runs through and characterizes all that which to us at present is still unknown. It is a reasonable universe. Now think! I, for one, cannot believe that it is reasonable to suppose that the universe takes such pains through millions of years to ac-

complish magnificent results for nothing at all! From the fire-mist, millions of years, until this little earth of ours swings, a globe, around the sun; thousands on thousands of years while it cools, and until it becomes the abode of sense and life; thousands on thousands of years while the lower forms of life dominate it, while it is climbing up through fish and bird and mammal to man; then thousands on thousands of years while man is going through the process of preparation; thousands on thousands of years while humanity climbs up at last to the height of Homer, Pericles, Virgil, Goethe, Shakspere, to the more magnificent heights of Confucius, Gautama, Mohammed, Jesus; climbing up to these magnificent peaks of intellectual and spiritual light and power.

Now, friends, I find it almost impossible to believe that through millions of years of preparation the universe should have reached on and on up to the production of these marvellous results for the sake of — what? Nothing! To snuff out all that it has taken such pains to produce, to end in a blank after such elaborate and careful preparation!

It seems to me absurd. And so, if I had no other reason than this, I should still trust in continued existence after death, trust that this magnificent work which the universe has been at such pains to perfect would continue, and mean something in the ages that are to come.

But I frankly say to you that these things are not what scientists would call demonstration, they are not absolute proof: they are simply magnificent probabilities.

Then is there anything else? I wish now to call your attention to a class of facts that have only recently come to be recognized seriously by the earnest and competent students of the world. A few years ago a man appeared in

France who claimed to have discovered a power that after him came to be called "Mesmerism." Now the same thing is called hypnotism, the name only being changed.

A biassed scientific commission was appointed to investigate the matter while Mesmer still lived; and they pronounced it all delusion and fraud. To-day there is not a competent thinker on the face of the earth who does not know that a hundred times more than Mesmer claimed is true.

What does this mean? It means simply that we are beginning to study these wonderful minds of ours. The mind of man is the last continent on earth to be explored. Until these very modern years it has been more unknown than the wilds of darkest Africa itself. We are, however, beginning to study the mind of man. We have found not only that these marvellous things are true; but we have found that clairvoyance, clairaudience, and telepathy are real. I mean by this,—be sure you understand me,—not that all that is said by those who claim to be clairvoyant and clairaudient is so. No. I simply mean that these powers exist.

What does this mean? It means that these wondrous minds of ours, these souls, ourselves, can, under certain conditions, see without any eyes and hear without any ears, and communicate half-way round the globe, without any of the ordinary means of communication. What does that mean? Does it prove a future life? Not at all. But I suggest to you as to whether it does not take a significant step in that direction.

It is said that Ralph Waldo Emerson and Theodore Parker were one day taking a walk in Concord when a believer in the Second Advent rushed wildly up to them,

and told them that the world was very near its end. I omit Theodore Parker's reply, which was very witty, but irrelevant here, and call your attention only to that of Emerson. Emerson said: "Well, my friend, suppose the world is coming to an end! I think I can get along without it!"

Now the point I wish you to note as the suggestion of this reply of Emerson's is this: If a mind can see without eyes, if it can hear without ears, if it can communicate without a tongue, and that without much regard to distance in space,— in other words, if I can get along for awhile without so many of these faculties and powers of the body,— may it not be reasonable for me to believe that I can get along without it entirely?

There is another whole class of facts which I must suggest to you. I shall not go into them to-day in the way of giving specific and detailed experiences. I now simply make certain assertions, which I am ready to prove whenever called upon to do so.

There is in existence, as most of you are aware, in England and this country, a Society for Psychical Research. It is a society that investigates that whole class of alleged facts and happenings which have been believed in from the beginning of the world, but which, by educated people in our modern life, have been brushed one side and treated with contempt.

I have been studying these matters now for over twenty years, with no personal bias, with no personal wish,— why should any one have a wish of that sort?— to believe what is not true, but simply with a desire to find out what sort of being I am, and whether there is any scientific reason for trusting that I may overleap the fact of death.

Now I wish you to note, friends, one fact. The things

that are asserted to be taking place in the modern world are precisely similar to the happenings of which the Bible, Old Testament and New, is full,— precisely similar facts. There is not a religion on the face of the earth that has not had its birth in the midst of alleged facts of a similar kind. There is not a nation on the face of the earth that has not been telling these stories from the beginning.

What are they? They are visions, they are voices, they are messages coming from across the border. They are based on the idea that the other world is as real as this, and that at times the partition is so thin that we can gain glimpses through and hear words that are uttered, that sometimes even the denizens of that world on special missions do appear in this.

If you are not ready to investigate facts like these in the modern world, why should you believe precisely similar tales two thousand, three thousand, four thousand years old, on the testimony of nobody knows whom, when you cannot possibly investigate them to find out whether they are creditable witnesses or not or whether they really saw what they asserted took place?

I leave you face to face with that dilemma.

There is not a belief in a future life on the face of the earth to-day that does not reach back to some asserted happening of this particular kind.

Now a word in regard to the reappearance of Jesus after death. I told you that I did not believe that the body, the physical body, of Jesus, was raised from the dead. I do believe, however, that his disciples saw him and talked with him. I do not consider that the evidence that has come down to us, two thousand years old, is sufficient to establish that belief. But I believe that similar things have happened

in the modern world. Therefore, I can believe that they may have happened then.

I believe that Jesus was seen. I believe that this magnificent fact is that which inspired the early Church and gave us our Easter morn. I believe that the story which grew up years and years afterwards (that his physical body disappeared from the tomb of Joseph) is not supported by adequate proof; and, if it were, it would only be a difficulty to my faith.

Jesus did not want his physical body any more than I shall want mine; and what the early disciples needed was not the belief that his physical body was raised from the dead,— for that must die again if it were,— but that Jesus lived right through death.

I do not believe in death any more. I believe in life. I believe I am to go through that process that they call death no more disturbed or troubled or changed than I am by the fact that I went through the sleep of last night and waked up this morning.

This is my belief: I believe that Jesus lived, that all live unto God. "He is not a God of the dead, but of the living."

Now at the end. I should be ready, friends, at the proper time and place to adduce what I call good evidence in a court of justice for all that I have said. I cannot go into it this morning; but here at the close I wish to suggest one thought for our comfort, and give you two or three quotations, because they are such beautiful expressions of what is my real belief.

You know there are certain high mountains which catch the first rays of the morning's sun; and it is hours and hours after that before the plains and the valleys are light. So there are mountainous men, seers, taller men intellectually

and spiritually than you and I, who can see away over our heads. The divine sunrise smites them first; they look away down the future; they see things which are not yet visible to us. So we call them seers. Their vision is not scientific proof; but the experience of the world has justified our trust in them so many times that I find it easy to believe them.

Now I wish to read you the expression of the trust of two or three of these seers.

First, a few lines from Edward Rowland Sill, a young American poet who died of consumption at about the age of thirty, but who had the promise in him of wonderful things, could he have lived:—

> What if, some morning when the stars were paling
> And the dawn whitened and the East was clear,
> Strange peace and rest fell on me from the presence
> Of a benignant Spirit standing near:
>
> And I should tell him, as he stood beside me,
> "This is our earth, most friendly earth and fair;
> Daily its sea and shore through sun and shadow
> Faithful it turns, robed in its azure air:
>
> "There is blest living here, loving and serving
> And quest of truth and serene friendship dear;
> But stay not, Spirit! Earth has one destroyer—
> His name is Death: flee, lest he find thee here!"
>
> And what if then, while the still morning brightened
> And freshened in the elm the summer's breath,
> Should gravely smile on me the gentle angel,
> And take my hand and say, "My name is Death"?

Then just those sweet words of Tennyson, the last that appear in his volume of completed poems, "Crossing the Bar":—

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark;

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
When I have crost the bar.

And now one more word, and this time the last thing in the volume of Walt Whitman's poems: —

Joy! Shipmate — joy!
(Pleased to my soul at death I cry)
Our life is closed — our life begins;
The long, long anchorage we leave,
The ship is clear at last — she leaps!
She swiftly courses from the shore;
Joy! Shipmate — joy!

# HELL AND HEAVEN.

PAUL says: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

This figure, borrowed from the experiences of the farmer, chimes in perfectly with the law of the universe which has only been clearly discovered and scientifically demonstrated in our own day. We are under the reign of law. What we are, what we have been, what we shall be, is determined in accordance with it. And this reign of law is not confined to this life or to this planet. It is universal, one God, one law, throughout the universe.

I leave this, then, simply as the underlying principle which is to determine the course of our discussion concerning the essential things which make up hell, which constitute heaven in this world, in all worlds.

In order that the matter may be made very clear to us, I shall be obliged this morning, in the first place, to touch on the doctrines of hell and heaven as they are set forth in the Old and New Testaments and in the traditions and creeds of the popular churches. Then I shall consider the question as to who are to inhabit these hells or heavens, as to what reason we have — if we have any — for holding to the traditional views, and then outline for you what seem to me to be the eternal and necessary truths connected with character, and which therefore must determine the matter of happiness or suffering in any part of the universe.

If any one supposes that I might omit the earlier part of my theme, I simply say in reply that we cannot know anything alone, anything as set apart and separated from everything else. In order to understand the present conditions of theological thought in regard to these matters and what I believe to be the thought of the future, we need to understand, at least in outline, the thought of the past out of which present conditions have sprung.

And we must remember here the principle which I have enunciated possibly more than once during the course of this past winter; and that is that theologies, religious theories, are necessarily and intimately associated with geographical and scientific ideas,—always a cosmology intimately linked with every theological scheme.

In order, then, that you may know where hell and heaven have been conceived to be in the past, you need to have in your mind again a clear conception of the world or universe as it was held in the past.

I have already told you — I simply remind you of it — that the old universe was very small. Until within a few hundred years, in the thought of mankind, the entire universe was not so large as we know the orbit of the moon to be to-day. Here was the little, flat, stationary earth. A few miles only above the blue dome was heaven, as material and real in that sense as the earth itself.

Visit the Plains of Shinar, for a hint of Hebrew thought, and see the builders starting their tower with which they verily believed they would be able to climb up into heaven. This indicates how small the world was to their thought, and how short a distance away heaven was supposed to be.

It was not confined to the Hebrews. Go back among the

Greeks and Romans, and you will find the Titans piling mountains on top of each other, so that they may be able to scale heaven, and attack the gods in their very seats. This lets you into the child-world thought about the universe.

Now in that universe where was heaven and where was hell? and what kind of places were they?

Heaven, as I said, was just above the blue dome; and, when they came to believe in hell at all, it was a cavern just a little ways underground. And you need only to study mediæval literature, the traditions and stories of the saints, to study Dante, to go back and read Virgil and Homer, in order to come face to face with the real belief of the common people that there was a cave, if they could only find it, through which they could descend into the underworld. And they believed that the inhabitants of this underworld frequently emerged from this cave, and interfered in all sorts of ways with what was going on here among men.

This, then, is the general picture that you must have in your mind.

Now I wish to bring you face to face with something that seems to me strange, and which I have never been able to explain. Moses, it is said, being the reputed son of Pharaoh's daughter, was brought up and trained in all the learning of the Egyptians; and we know that the Egyptians believed so vividly in the other life that it was as real to them as this was. They had their hells and their heavens, their places of punishment and their places of reward; and they pictured in their "Book of the Dead" the souls just freed from the body as going before the judges, their gods, and their thoughts, their whole course of life, being esti-

mated and weighed before they were assigned their places in the other world.

And yet, when we come to Moses as dealing with the children of Israel, we find no belief in any future life, in heaven or hell either, for the ordinary inhabitants of the earth.

Did it ever occur to you that throughout the entire Old Testament history there were only two persons ever represented as having gone to heaven? They were Enoch and Elijah, both of whom were translated and taken up into the presence of the angels, where God held his court. Throughout the entire Old Testament history nobody else was ever thought of as having gone to heaven, in the modern sense of that word.

And what, perhaps, will surprise you even more, there is nobody throughout the Old Testament history who is ever represented as having gone to hell at all, in the modern sense of that word.

It is partly the fault of the translators, and it is partly the fact that words change their meaning; but I wish you to note what is true,—that there is not one single instance in the Old Testament, from its first word to its last, where the term "hell" means hell in the ordinary orthodox significance of that term.

What the Jews believed was something like this: At first, as I said, in the early part of their history, they had little belief in angels or spirits at all. And let me postpone what I was going to say for a moment, while I enlarge upon this idea to make it a little clearer.

You are familiar with the fact that in the New Testament the Sadducees are represented as the great typical doubters. They were the ones who had no belief in angels or spirits.

What it means was that the Sadducees were really the old-fashioned conservatives among the Jews: they held to what was the old-time Mosaic belief, the belief of the Pentateuch. They rejected the later, new-fangled traditions that had sprung up, as they held, without any Scriptural authority or warrant. This means that towards the latter part of the history of the Jews they began to have a growing belief in a real and active life after death. There is no trace of any commonly-accepted ideas about angels or spirits until the time of the captivity, when they came into contact with the Persians and Babylonians, who had these beliefs fully developed.

Sheol, the old word sometimes translated "hell," sometimes "the grave,"— Sheol was simply an underground cavern in general, a place where people went when they died; but it was not a place of conscious, active existence. The souls, if they really had souls, were supposed to be inhabiting this underground cavern in a sort of sleep,— semi-conscious or unconscious condition. There was no real active life.

Read, as bearing on this subject, certain passages in the Old Testament, which I have not time to go into an explanation of in full. The Old Testament says there is no work, there is no joy, there is no — anything — in Sheol. The inhabitants of Sheol do not praise God any more. This is the Old Testament idea in regard to the underworld.

By and by, as I said, at the time of Jesus, continued existence and places for the good and the bad were quite developed in the popular mind; but they had not got themselves written into those books which became a part of the Canonical Scriptures. So the statement I made as to the

teaching of the Old Testament on this subject is literally true.

What was the belief at the time of Christ? Nobody then went to heaven, however good they might be. They believed that the souls of the dead continued to exist and were conscious; but they all went down into Hades. Hades is simply the Greek term for Sheol, meaning substantially the same thing,— a cavern under the surface of the earth.

When Jesus, for example, on the cross is represented as saying to the penitent thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," he did not mean thou shalt be with me in heaven; for it was not supposed that Jesus himself was going to heaven. He was going down to Hades, this underworld.

But by this time the underworld had been divided into two parts. On the one side was the place where the happy were supposed to abide,— the good; the other, the bad. One was called Paradise: the other was called Gehenna. But both of them were in this underground cavern.

When Jesus was raised from the dead,— I am now setting forth the popular belief,— it was supposed that he broke through this prison-house where all souls had been hidden away from the beginning of the world. And in the New Testament you remember the passage where it says, "He led captivity captive." This is simply a Hebraic expression, meaning only that he led up with him, when he went into heaven, a multitude of the good who had been held captive in the underworld until that time. So that here is the first time in the history of the Hebrew or Christian thought when any of the souls of the good went to heaven. When Jesus ascended on high, he led with him these spirits that had been in prison.

Now, when we come to consider early Christian thought on this subject, we must keep this constantly in mind. Although Jesus went to heaven and took these specially selected souls,— supposed to be Abraham and other saints and noble ones of the ancient time,— when he took them with him, it did not mean at all that from that time to this all the people the minute they died were to follow him. Still, in early Christian thought, the dead went down to this underworld; and here, in accordance with the popular beliefs, they were to stay until the day of the resurrection and the last judgment.

It has been a popular teaching that, since the body has shared on the part of the sinner with his sins, and on the part of the saint with his self-denials and sufferings for truth, at death that body should share in the final suffering or the final joy.

You must remember, of course, that people, when this doctrine grew up, had no conception of the truth that each man during the course of his life wears half a dozen or ten or fifteen different bodies, and that it would be a little inconvenient to have all of them raised. They forgot all this, or they did not know it, rather. So they taught that there could be no complete misery, no complete happiness, until the soul was joined to this body again, which has shared with it the good or the evil of this present life here on earth.

So the soul was to lie quiescent in "The Intermediate State." I think most of you remember that phrase,— whether you have ever stopped to find out what it meant or not. At the resurrection these souls were to be joined again to the body, and the evil were to be sent to their final abode, and the good were to be received into eternal felicity.

This has been a popular doctrine of the Church, varied of course by different beliefs here and different beliefs there throughout the larger part of Christian history.

The idea that most of us hold to-day,— or that most people hold to-day, let me say rather,— that the minute a man dies his soul goes either to hell or to heaven, is really a very modern idea, not the one which has been held generally in the history of the Church.

Now that you may see how real this other world has been in the thought of men, let me call your attention for a moment to that marvellous poem of Dante. I presume the most of you have read his "Inferno." It lets you into the secret of the thought of Christendom in the Middle Ages. Dante, wandering through the woods, finds a place where the mouth of the Infernal Regions may be entered. He goes through. He finds Virgil there. Virgil was one of the noblest men of the old pagan era, as he conceived him. But Virgil could not go to heaven, he was not a Christian: the atoning blood did not apply to him; and Dante could not find it in his heart to put him in the tortures of the Inferno; and so he lives in a sort of medium kind of place, neither suffering very much nor capable of the highest and finest joys. The beatific vision, the reward of the saints, could never be open to him, although he did not share the torments of those who consciously sinned against the light.

This reveals the thought of Dante concerning the heroes of the extra-Christian world.

He discovers Hades or the Inferno under the ground, its descending circles the scene of different degrees of punishment and sin, reaching down like a tunnel. At the centre, instead of the intense heat, the lake of fire, that we have

been accustomed to associate with that world, he finds Satan frozen in everlasting ice. This is the culmination, and the worst thing that Dante was able to conceive. During his strange journey, the poet finds the spot where the stones of the walls had been misplaced, when Jesus broke through and escaped.

It was all so real to his imagination as this.

But, in ordinary Protestant thought, for two hundred years the belief has sometimes been that souls went directly to hell or to heaven, and then came back again to be reunited with their bodies at the time of the resurrection just preceding the general judgment, or else that they lay in this quiescent state, this intermediate condition, waiting for the resurrection of the body,—one or the other. But after that all the bad went to this place of eternal torture, hopeless, and without any end, and all the good went straight to heaven, there to be happy in the presence of God forevermore.

Let us note now a little in detail who were to be the inhabitants of these two places.

According to the Catholic creeds there is no chance for anybody to be saved who is not a Catholic. The Athanasian Creed says you must believe everything that is contained in that or, no doubt, you must perish everlastingly.

I am well aware that, if you were to talk with any intelligent priest to-day, he would tell you that possible leniency might be shown towards some who had been specially noble in the olden times, and that the mercy of God might extend to those that had been ignorant without their fault, but who had tried to do the best which they knew.

But there has been little chance of salvation from the

point of view of any particular Church for any except those who belonged to that Church.

The Greek Church will tell you that you must be orthodox, which means belong to their Church, in order to be certain of salvation. And so most of the Protestant denominations have told us that only the elect, those chosen before the foundation of the world, chosen without any regard to their character or what their course of life should be, chosen from the mere good pleasure of God, chosen not because they were worth saving, but simply to illustrate the grace, the mercy, the pity, the salvation of God,—that these were the only ones who had any chance of going to heaven; and that, no matter how good people might be, unless they have been chosen, elected, they were simply to be passed by, to illustrate the justice and the wrath of God through all eternity.

Now I wish to suggest to you one or two things, because, so far as my experience goes, in talking with people, there are very few who ever do any thinking on these matters. I am amazed as I talk with people, intelligent in every other direction, to see how they read their Bibles merely as a religious exercise, without any use of reason, any attempt to understand, comprehend, really what it is that they read. I talk with people almost every week, and ask them if they know that such and such things are in the creeds of the churches to which they belong; and they have never thought of it, perhaps never have read the creeds. I ask them if they know that the New Testament teaches such and such a thing: they never thought of it, they never read the New Testament to find out what it really teaches.

How many loving, tender mother hearts are there in this city of New York to-day who know that the printed and

published creeds of the Presbyterian Church, for example, the Prayer Book of the Episcopal, the Anglican Church,—how many know that these both teach to-day the damnation of non-elect and unbaptized infants?

And yet this is true. And how terribly real this belief is on the part of Catholics! I can give you a personal illustration. When I was living in California, there was a man, my neighbor, one of the roughest, most profane men I ever knew, but a devout Catholic. And his little baby-girl was very ill, and he thought she was going to die; and he came to me, a Protestant, because he had no time to find a priest, frantic with anxiety, to ask that I should come and baptize his child, so that, if it died before morning, it would not go to an eternal hell. The Catholic Church allows that kind of baptism, if no other can be obtained. It will allow a nurse, anybody, to baptize an infant, if a priest cannot be found.

Why? To save that tiny infant from the flaming eternal wrath of the Almighty. Think of it!

Just consider! The father of a child like this meets with an accident on the way to a priest, or on the way to me, if he is not able to find a priest, or he is not able to find me or anybody else to act as a substitute. And this little child, if the priest had got there in time or I had arrived in time to place a little water on its forehead and say a few words over it, would have gone to heaven, and God would have loved it and cared for it forever. But, just because I am a little late in getting there, God hates and curses and torments it forever!

Friends, think of it! In this nineteenth century after Jesus, in the midst of our boasted intelligence and civilization, the prayer-books and the creeds of the greatest and most popular churches in the world still teaching an un-

speakably infernal character like that, and attributing it to our Father in heaven! And intelligent, cultivated, tender-hearted, loving fathers and mothers supporting such churches, and not demanding that the infamous lie be stricken out of the books!

Who is to go to hell, then?

If you trace the history of Christendom for the last eighteen hundred years, half of the noblest men of Europe have gone there, half of the noblest men of America. Every man with manhood enough in him to do any thinking, to ask any questions, puts himself in danger of hell. Every man clear-headed enough to have a nobler idea of God than the popular creeds taught him and brave enough to speak his thoughts has gone hopelessly to hell. The great liberators and leaders go to hell. Men like Tyndall, Huxley, Darwin go to hell. Those who help the world out of its ignorance and superstition, and up into the light, go to hell.

I said once, where Mr. Moody was conducting à revival service, that, if he would pick out the people that he was going to take with him to his particular kind of heaven, I would gladly go with the rest, wherever it might be.

Consider, friends, now for a moment, what reason is there to-day why we should believe this horrible doctrine of hell, — that, unless a person is saved according to the particular method of a particular Church, he is to go there?

How is anybody to know? The Catholic Church has one way of saving, the Greek Church another. Different Protestant denominations all have their different ways. How is a poor bewildered seeker to know which one is the real way?

But what reason is there why we should believe that God has ever created any such place, or that he sends any one

there, hopelessly to inhabit a prison of darkness and torture world without end? Is there any reason why you and I or any intelligent person should believe anything of the kind to-day? If there is, I for one have never been able to discover it.

What are these hells? They are simply the reflections in the other world of the cruel, ignorant, revengeful, barbaric, torturing kind of people who invented them. Visit the Bastile before it was pulled down by the indignant people of Paris, and see there a man, for no crime except that he won the enmity — perhaps because of his nobility — of some lord or king. Behold him in some loathsome dungeon, dripping with foul water, full of toads and snakes and vermin of every conceivable kind. Think of him rotting year after year, so long as life could remain in his body, in a dungeon like that, for no crime at all; and think of the persons who put him there, dancing their butterfly existence away, utterly untroubled in their pleasures or their sleep by the memory of what he is passing through. And then you can understand how people in that stage of barbarism could invent hells in the other world, too,— only the natural expression of the kind of barbarism with which they visited those whom they regarded as their enemies in this life.

Is there any reason for our believing theological conceptions of men like that? That is two hundred years ago perhaps. Go back to the Middle Ages, come to the time of the Borgias, visit the ancient time when it was part of the pleasure of the people to see gladiatorial shows,— men killed for the delectation of gentlemen and ladies who wished for a sensation! You need not go back very far. Look at Spain to-day, the most orthodox nation of Europe, with its delectation for the lady and little child and priest

in its bull fight. Go back until you come to the time of a Nero, back and down, and take their imaginings of God and of the other life, and crystallize them into creeds, and tell us that we must be bound hand and foot, brain, heart, forever, to believe their crude and cruel and horrible dreams about God and the other life!

Right in there is the birthplace of all the hells that the hideous and cruel imaginings of the world have ever invented.

Let any one point to me a text in the Bible, and say that I must accept it as teaching a doctrine of eternal torment. Friends, let me say deliberately,— and I mean every word that I speak,— if the doctrine of eternal hell was taught in large and plain letters on every page of that book from beginning to end, if every writer had signed his belief in such a doctrine in the presence of a notary of his time, I would reject it indignantly and with all my soul! No amount of human belief, no quantity of human testimony, can make me believe that the God of this universe is a devil. No writings and no men, however numerous or great, shall make me doubt the eternal and universal Fatherhood of him who tells us to think of him as our tender Father, and of ourselves as his poor, weak, and troubled children.

There is no possible way of proving such a hideous belief as this. I brand it as a slander on God, and will trust my soul to the issue.

Now, then, let us come to the modern world. If there be no place called hell that is eternal in its nature, if there be no place called heaven that is changeless in its nature, what are we to believe concerning the destiny of souls after they leave this world?

Are all to be treated alike? Does everybody go to

heaven? Does it make no difference what a man thinks or speaks, or how he conducts himself, or what kind of character he develops here?

It seems to me clear that it makes all the difference in the world. I do not claim to know in detail about that other life. I never expect to know in detail about it until I get there and study its conditions for myself; for let me ask you to note carefully one special thing. We may be able, and I believe we shall be, as I intimated to you last Sunday, to demonstrate continued existence. That, however, is entirely another thing from our being able to investigate the details of that other life. Just in so far as that other life transcends the present and is unlike it, just in so far it must remain unknown to us until we come into contact with it by our own personal experience.

Let me illustrate what I mean. You talk with a boy four years old, and you have got to keep down to the four-year-old level. You cannot put ten-year-old ideas into the four-year-old head. I am referring now, of course, to normal children. You cannot put into the ten-year-old head fifteen-year-old ideas and thoughts and comprehensions. You are limited by the person's conception and ability to think with whom you are speaking.

A boy asks you what it means to be a man. You cannot tell him. A little girl asks her mother what it means to be a woman. She cannot tell her. We know we can interpret to the child only what the child can understand.

Suppose I visit Central Africa, and come back and tell you I have made a wonderful discovery there, and you say, What is it? And I say, It is unlike anything you ever saw. What color? It is a new color. What shape? you say. Well, not the shape of anything you ever saw. How can I

describe it? The only way I can describe anything to a person who has never seen it is to compare it with something which he has seen.

So that, if this life is above and beyond and entirely unlike what we have become accustomed to by experience, then it must remain in that sense unknown, because all our knowledge is limited by our experience.

I may then be able to demonstrate the fact, though I may not be able to answer any of your questions as to details,—the kind of life, the kind of country, the kind of bodies we shall possess, the kind of occupations in which we shall engage.

Where are hell and heaven in the modern and rational thought of the universe?

In the first place let me call your attention to the changed conceptions which astronomy has made us familiar with. There is no heaven just over this dome of blue. There is no dome of blue, except to our eyes. There is no hell underground; for we have found that the world is a globe, and is spinning forever through space.

Where is hell? where is heaven?

I remember sermons of Spurgeon and Dr. Talmage in which they have indulged in flights of imagination in this direction. One, I remember, located heaven on the supposed central star of the universe, around which everything else revolved. Now there may be such a central star; but nobody knows anything about it. If there is, how far away is it? So far away that it takes light perhaps millions of years to traverse the space. How long would it take a soul to go to heaven if it were located there? It would take a train of cars somewhere between one and two hundred years, travelling at the rate of sixty miles an hour

and twenty-four hours a day, to reach the sun of our little system.

It is idle, then, for us to speculate about heaven's being the centre of the universe.

I incline to believe that the spirit world is all about us. I do not know any reason in the world for placing it away off somewhere else, except the impulse resulting from our inherited ideas. I believe that the spirit world may coexist with this planetary system of ours, and the good and the bad be kept no further away, some of them, than people are who live in the next street or in the next State.

I have had a great many people ask me this question: Are the good and the bad going to be all together in the next world? Would it not be necessary for the happiness of the good that they should be fenced away somewhere by themselves, and the bad fenced away and kept somewhere else? And, then, I have asked them a question which never seems to occur to them, as to whether the good and the bad are any more together in this world than they want to be.

No bad people except those I wanted have ever troubled me or haunted me very much. People do not thrust themselves on the society of other people, generally, unless they find some encouragement. People in this world may pass each other on the sidewalk, one of them in hell, and the other in heaven. They may touch elbows, and yet be further apart in their thoughts, their mental states, their characters, their careers, their destinies, than the stars in space are from each other.

These spiritual facts, spiritual conditions, solve a good many of these problems for us, if we give them a little reasonable attention.

I do not see any reason for fencing the good people and the bad people away from each other. I would not like to be fenced in anywhere, if I had my way, even in heaven.

And, in the next place, I believe that one of the characteristics of heaven — the heavenly state of mind and heart — will be the eternal opportunity to help people less developed and less well off than yourself. I do not want to be fenced away from hell. I have a good deal of sympathy with that old New England deacon who had a grand Christian characteristic in his heart. When he was asked if, at the last day, he should find he had made a mistake and was not going to be saved, but was going to hell, and in that case what he should do, he said he thought he should start a little prayer-meeting.

According to his ideas, he was going to help the people there. That was Christianity. This idea of going off into a selfish heaven, and letting the rest of the universe take care of itself, is a libel on the deepest and most Christian traits of humanity. It would be a libel on paganism even. For any decent man is better than that.

Let me read you here one little word from the Buddhist literature of China,— one of the sweetest things I ever saw, and with which we may contrast some of our Puritan literature: "Never will I seek or receive private individual salvation; never will I enter into final peace alone; but forever and ever and everywhere I will live and strive for the universal redemption of every creature throughout all the worlds."

I do not wish to be shut away from bad people, then. I believe one of the grandest things in the other life will be what has been to me, at any rate, one of the grandest things in this,— the endeavor to help somebody who does not know

quite as much as I have had an opportunity to know; to lift somebody, to lead somebody, to do something to make his life a little sweeter, a little easier for him.

Heaven, then, and hell are not essentially places anywhere: they are conditions, states of heart, character. Take that verse of Omar Khayyám, the old Persian poet of the twelfth century: —

> "I sent my soul into the invisible,
> Some letter of that after life to spell;
> And by and by my soul returned to me,
> And answered, 'I myself am heaven and hell,—
>
> "Heaven but the vision of fulfilled desire,
> And hell the shadow of a soul on fire.'"

That is heaven, there is hell.

What shall be our occupations in another life? It seems to me eminently reasonable, though I do not claim to know, that I should suggest something along these lines. If a man who has been living in Northern New England moves to Southern California, there will be a good many things that he was accustomed to do in that cold and barren wintry climate that there will be no need for his doing in his new home. Changed conditions suggest a change of occupation within certain limits.

There will be a good many things that we have to do here that we shall not need to continue doing in the other life. I believe, mark you, that we shall have bodies there as real, intensely more real and alive, than our present bodies. I have not time to go into that this morning.

I see no reason why we should not continue our scientific investigations.

Socrates, while he was talking with his disciples, just

before he drank the hemlock, said he thought he should be able to continue his studies in that new life on which he was entering. I do not see why scientific investigation should not be carried on there as it is not possible to carry it on here.

Old ex-President Hill, the grand Unitarian preacher and famous mathematician, when somebody asked him what he expected to do in heaven, answered that there were enough mathematical questions connected with the arc of a circle to keep him busy for several thousands of years.

Why should we not carry on our studies? Why should not art, in all its departments, and literature be developed there? Will Shakspere care no more for the drama, for the magnificent creations of character that have made him famous here? Will Liszt, Mozart, Mendelssohn, care no more for music? The great masters be no more interested in painting?

Why should not all these things that pertain to the mind, the soul, heart, find room not only, but unspeakable expansion, limitless growth beyond anything that we can comprehend here?

Such, then, it seems to me, may be our dream of the future. Not far away, not separated from the ignorant and the bad, whom we may be permitted to help. For mind you, the ignorant and the bad, those who break the laws of this universe, knowingly or unknowingly, must work out their deliverance from their conditions, whether it takes six months or a year, or a thousand years or a million. Broken law, the result of broken law, must follow us as a shadow follows the sun.

May we not, then, look forward to the fact that, when we pass through that gate, on the other side we are just what

we were when we entered? There is opportunity for us to go up or down, opportunity for us to help, to study, to grow, to be all that is possible for us to achieve. There in that future, under the guidance of our Father, in that realm of spirit we may pursue the pathway that we have begun here, thinking out after him God's thoughts, rising to higher and nobler views of him, and so finding an increasing joy and peace forever and ever.

# THE CHURCH OF YESTERDAY, TO-DAY, AND TO-MORROW.

JESUS founded no church. He gave no directions as to any organization whatsoever, he specified no officers or rulers, he left on record no directions as to any creed bond intended to bind his disciples together. And yet the Church, as you will see, as I go on, was a natural and necessary outgrowth of that which Jesus did. I wish, however, to begin by this perfectly outright and downright statement, because so many persons claim to trace back to the words of Jesus himself an authority, a method of organization, a system of rites or ceremonies, a creed, for which he is in no sense responsible.

Indeed, if you consider the conditions for the first twenty-five years after Jesus' death, you will see that the idea of anybody's expecting a church to be formed which should continue for the next eighteen hundred years is absurd.

If Jesus taught anything with perfect explicitness,— that is, on the supposition that he is correctly reported,— it is that he should return in the clouds of heaven, and bring the present order of affairs to an end, and set up, miraculously and suddenly, the heavenly kingdom within twenty-five years of the time when he spoke. He says explicitly, when they asked him the time for this great change to come, "Before this generation passes away," — this was the time.

If, then, the present order of affairs was to cease within

a generation, do you not see that neither Jesus nor the disciples could have expected the organization of any church that should extend its influence over the world and reach up the ages? Do you not see that such an idea could never have entered into their minds?

Jesus, then, founded no church, made no provision for its future here on earth. But, as years passed by and the expected appearance in the heavens did not take place, the disciples naturally grouped themselves together into little bodies, at first not organized at all, a mere meeting of brethren and sisters in sympathy with each other and trying to help each other, and then becoming loosely organized, in the most natural way in the world. They would wish some officers, some one to look after affairs; and so an "elder," some person who was looked upon with reverence, some one who possessed special efficiency for managing the business side of affairs, would be selected, and the church would be modelled at first very much on the synagogue, which existed all over the world wherever there were any Hebrews living.

It has been said that, if there had been no synagogue, there would have been no church. In a certain sense, this is true; but the church naturally organized itself. The people who revered Jesus and loved his memory and believed in his mission would come together on Sunday morning,— the morning when they believed he reappeared after his death,— and hold their religious and memorial services.

But these churches claimed no authority at first, and no one claimed any authority over them; and they had no fixed ritual, they had no definite ceremonies, they had no determined creed. The only condition of membership was a

desire on the part of any one to do honor to their waited leader and to enter into the fellowship of this new spirit which had come into the hearts of men.

But by and by, as churches grew in influence, as they were organized in the great centres of civilization,— Ephesus, Corinth, Antioch, Rome,— as the churches grew strong, and at last were recognized as a political power even throughout the Empire, do you not see how naturally the organization would grow? They would have their officers, elders, called presbyters, a word which we have retained until the present day; and by and by there would be some man of commanding influence, and he would obtain the office of bishop.

But let us note how simple an office that was at the outset: the word "bishop" means merely an overseer, a superintendent, some one who has an oversight of affairs,— that is all.

By and by, just as the Methodists organized themselves in this country, there would be a group of churches each having its own officers, and then some one superintendent of this group,— some one having the charge of church extension beyond the limits of organization at that time.

And by and by, modelling themselves after the earthly governments with which they were familiar, we find men of eminence and power claiming to exercise authority over not only the individual church, but groups of churches, made up of those that existed in some one particular province or geographical locality. And, in a perfectly natural way, it came to pass at last that the bishop at Rome asserted supreme authority over other bishops and other churches.

Why? I wish you to note the naturalness of the steps by which this condition of things came about. As I said, there

was no settled order of worship, there was no settled creed, there were no settled forms or ceremonies of any kind. So churches differed from each other in their methods or ideas. But by and by it would occur to somebody that there ought to be some concerted uniformity; that the churches ought to have a service of similar character in different parts of the Empire; that they ought to be united in their methods and ways; that there ought to be some one type of government. It was thus, perhaps, that the church of Ephesus and the church of Corinth would get into a dispute as to which should have its way: Ephesus would think the Corinthian church ought to adopt its method; and the church at Corinth would think the church at Ephesus ought to adopt its method. A case like this is suggested only by way of illustration.

And by and by, perhaps, they would leave it out to be arbitrated by some man looked up to with reverence, supposed to have the interests of the whole at heart, and to have some special wisdom in settling affairs; and he would be looked up to as the one to decide these matters. Naturally, a metropolitan minister — that is, a minister who was the servant of some great church in some great city — would almost inevitably be called upon to settle such differences. And, therefore, the overseer of the church at Rome, which was the centre and capital of the Empire, would almost inevitably be chosen. He was chosen, chosen over and over again, until by and by that which had been extended to him as a matter of courtesy he began to claim as a matter of right. And the idea grew up that the first overseer of the first church in Rome had had the keys of the kingdom of heaven and of hell committed to his keeping, and that he had a right of lordship over the Church.

I feel perfectly certain — I cannot enter into the discussion this morning, giving you my reasons — that those words, conferring the keys upon Peter, are an interpolation and an after-thought, an invention of that same Church which invented the fraudulent decretals on which it based its claim to exercise temporal power; for Jesus himself says explicitly — and I do not believe he would contradict himself on a central point like this — that the kings of the earth exercise lordship and they that are great assert authority over their fellows, but "it shall not be so among you": he that is great is simply to be servant.

But by and by, as I said, the Bishop of Rome began to assert the right to dictate to all the other churches as to how they should conduct their affairs, as to matters of belief, as to matters of conduct, ceremony,— whatsoever concerned the organization and welfare of the Church. But Constantine removed the capital of the Empire to Constantinople, and so there was another great bishop there; and for a long time the conflict was intense and bitter between these two bishops as to which should be recognized as the head of the Church.

There were, of course, doctrinal disputes also; but the reason why we have a Greek church to-day and a Roman church is to be found in the fact that neither the Bishop of Rome nor the Bishop of Constantinople would bow to the other, and so they split the Church in two. And from that day to this each has claimed original authority and power and headship conferred by Jesus himself.

This, then, is the way — and you see how purely natural it is — that the Church grew from the first simple beginnings until it claimed lordship over, not only this world, but the other.

I wish you to note now a few points touching the claims that the Church has made in the past.

In the first place, you know that until within a very short time the Church has claimed — and some different parts of the Church make the claim still — that it, and it alone, stood here on earth as the mouthpiece and the arm of God. The Church has claimed that it held in its hands the destiny of human souls; that it had divine authority to shut up heaven or to open it, to shut up hell or to open it, to shut up purgatory or to open it. The Church claimed to stand and speak and act for the Almighty. It not only made this claim concerning the other world, but it claimed to hold all the affairs of this world in its hands as well. The Church has claimed to be able to work miracles, to control natural law, to govern all the affairs of human life.

The Church has stood by the cradle, and by its magic touch has claimed to change the new-born child from a child of the devil to a child of God. It has claimed to direct the education of the child from the very first until it had come to be a man.

The Church has claimed the power of turning the unhealthy — and as it claimed the unholy — fires of human passion into the pure white flame of sacred love. It has claimed the power to speed the weak and faltering footsteps of the old man, as he crossed the threshold at the other confine of life, and to give him safe passage through the dark shadow and entrance into eternal felicity.

The Church has claimed and exercised the power to set up kings and overturn them. It has claimed the power to send an army out with the blessing of God upon it and the assurance of victory or to threaten it for disobedience with defeat. The Church has claimed to con-

trol the winds and the seas, so that, when the mariner started out upon his voyage, the priest behind with ceremony and prayer assured him safety upon the great deep.

The Church has claimed to control the prosperity of the agriculturist, the farmer; to be able to send drought or the needed rains; to give fertility or to blight all the promise of the crops. The Church has held the prosperity of the merchant in its hands.

There is not a single department of human life that the Church has not claimed to touch with magic, miraculous power, and to control. Not only that, it has set the limits to thought; it has absorbed music and art; it has told philosophy what subjects it might investigate, what airs might be fanned by its ambitious wings, to what safe perch it must come after its audacious flights.

The Church has claimed the right to tell people what they must think about this universe, as to when it was created, and why and how. It has claimed the right to tell men that they must accept its ideas as to the origin and the nature as well as the destiny of man. It has set the limits to all scientific investigation, saying, You may study as much as you please and as widely as you please; but, if you do not come back at last, and settle down contentedly within the boundaries of the creeds which I have fixed forever, then you must be looked upon in heaven and earth as anathema.

This has been the Church's claim over this world.

But the Church has not been all evil. I frankly say to you, friends, that, as I study carefully the history of the last fifteen hundred years, I find myself wondering sometimes as to whether the world would not have been better if the Church had not existed. For the Church,— note this,

please,— the Church has originated and taught no ethical ideas that did not exist before, nothing higher, finer, sweeter, diviner, more human, than can be found in India, in Egypt, in China, in ancient Greece, in Rome. While the Church has asserted its sovereignty over man, it has done all it could to prevent the free growth and development of intellect. It has made it a sin to think; and those nations that have submitted to the dictation of the Church most completely have been crushed down intellectually to a level below mediocrity.

The Church has the effrontery sometimes to claim that everything in the way of modern civilization, intelligence, freedom, hope for man, is its gift. And yet I defy any man on the face of the earth to point out a single step in advance in the way of the world's thinking that has not been banned and cursed by some representative of the Church. The Church has stood in the way of every invention, every discovery. All the great names from Copernicus to Darwin have been pointed at as those who were to be avoided by those who have officially represented the Church.

And, then, the Church has done another great evil to the world: it has placed the emphasis always on belief and loyalty to its own organization, on something else than character. For, while the Church has claimed to have the keys of the kingdom of heaven, it has never proposed to let any man in merely because he was good, never because he was Christ-like. It is the man who believes what she says he must believe; it is the man who performs her rites and ceremonies, who partakes of her sacraments; it is the man who is loyal to her authority. And these she has always found a way to admit, however black and infamous their characters might be.

These are strong statements, I know; but I believe that history will bear me out in making them.

What then? Is the Church to pass away? No, friends, the evil of the Church is right here. Do not misunderstand me. The evil of the Church is not in its aim, its intent, its spirit: it is in certain intellectual assumptions and certain political ambitions on the part of those who control its organization. The evil of the Church in the past lies in its claim to be infallible, to put limits to human growth. It has dared to imitate the fabled king who brought his chair out upon the seashore, and forbade the tides to advance beyond the limits set by his will.

So far as the Church has been able to do it, it has kept the world from growing and coming of age. There is the evil of it.

But the Church is not going to die, it is not going to pass away. A church may: this particular church, that particular church, may. Government does not die out of the world because a monarchy falls or is transformed. Literature does not perish because a school of writers which has dictated the style of an age changes or passes away. Health and the care of health do not cease because schools of medical treatment die out and become antiquated.

So religion does not pass away because a particular church becomes antiquated and outgrown.

The Church, then, is not to die out, is not to pass away. It is to remain, I believe, the grandest institution on the face of the earth.

I want to indicate the condition of the Church of to-day and what I believe it is to be in the to-morrow that awaits the future of the world.

The Church to-day is passing through a transformation

compelled by the growing freedom of thinking and the grand advances of human knowledge. This is the reason why you find cries of heresy north and south and east and west. Ministers and people sitting in the pews — both are gradually outgrowing the old statements; and they are either compelling their change or showing such a practical indifference to them that they lie unused and almost forgotten. This is the condition of things through which we are passing.

I wish to indicate now — my theme is too large to admit of going deeply into the matter — a few of the things I think the Church is to stand for to-morrow.

I say the Church is not to die out and pass away. Why? Because man is essentially, necessarily, eternally, a religious being. The religious hunger of the world has been on the whole, I believe, its mightiest hunger. Hunger for bread, that hunger which we call love, and the hunger for God are the three great hungers of the world. And neither of them by any possibility can ever pass away.

Man, then, is necessarily and eternally a religious being; and religion, like art, like science, like anything else that is a permanent thought and care of man, comes of necessity to organize itself, and so you have the Church. It makes no difference what you call it. The Greek word *ekklesia*, which, translated, becomes our "church," means simply a company called together, a meeting, a voluntary association.

The Church, then, is based on the permanently religious nature of man,— a foundation more enduring than the eternal hills, because the earth and the visible heaven may pass away, but this will not.

Now, then, what shall this Church stand for in future? I said that the old Church stood for human salvation. It

claimed to be the power that could assure man of salvation. I believe that the Church of to-morrow is to hold in its hands, in a certain modern, free, purely rational sense, the secret and conditions of human salvation,— not salvation from the wrath of God, not salvation from any evil power in this world or the next,— any evil personal power, I mean,— not salvation in the sense of escape out of one place and admission to another. But the Church is to stand in the coming time for the highest spiritual nature of man,— for truth, for love, for mercy, pity, sympathy, human help,— for these great spiritual verities which bind society together, which make men and women what they are, and which assure their happiness in this world or any other world.

I think that there is a certain class of men who, when they give up their old ideas, get it into their heads that it does not make any special difference how they live or what they do, that they are all to be equally well off in another world. But, if you stop and think of it a moment, you will remember that salvation is not escaping one place and gaining entrance to another, but is what you become; and that you cannot be saved until you have become what you ought to be, for that is being saved; that you cannot enter heaven until you gain heaven in yourself, for that is what heaven means.

When you get this clearly in mind, you will see that it does make all the difference in the world what kind of lives you live, what kind of thoughts you think, what kind of words you speak, whether you are selfish or unselfish, whether you devote yourselves to one pursuit here on earth or to another.

If salvation meant simply voyaging from this world to another planet, and there entering into some beautiful land

the outer conditions of which were desirably fine, and if it meant you were to be happy just because you were there, that would be one thing. But you may wander through this universe from planet to planet, one century after another, but you will never find heaven except as the spiritual nature in you is cultivated and developed, until you have learned to enter into and live in those ranges of your being which are heaven.

If you give yourselves throughout this life to the things that perish with the using, and that you cannot take with you, where will your heaven be, then?

The Church, then, stands for salvation to-day: it will stand for it to-morrow, because it insists upon this cultivation of the eternal elements in us, the spiritual nature of man, those things that link us to God and make us his children, and so of necessity heirs of eternal life.

I said that the old Church claimed to hold in its hand all human welfare and prosperity here. I believe that there is to be no agent in the future which is to render such a service in the way of solving social and industrial and monetary problems as is the Church. What other agencies are there engaged in solving these?

I do not believe that it is possible to reorganize society in such a way that everybody will be satisfied and at peace so far as their external conditions are concerned. Sometimes I hear people asking, What is to be the solution of our industrial and social problems? Why, there is to be no solution. There is never coming a time when we shall have got everything nicely arranged and fixed, and everybody is satisfied, and we are done. We are in a universe the characteristic of which is growth. We cannot fix things, and stay anywhere. We must be forever on the march.

And you never will get these things arranged by a division of property, by a reorganization of society. There are not offices enough for everybody, there are not enough high social positions for everybody, there is not money enough for everybody. The solution does not lie in that direction.

We cannot all be the head, we cannot all be the eye, we cannot all be the feet, we cannot all be this organ or that. What we need to learn is that we each solve the problem of life for ourselves by being first noble men and women, and then filling the place where we are finely and sweetly and truly as we may.

Here is the only solution of the problem that will ever be found; and for this the Church, the true Church, the ideal Church of the future, is to stand, and no other organization on the face of the earth does stand for it.

The Church is to stand for character, to stand for righteousness; and it is to insist forever that the rich and the high shall be first just, then tender, kindly, loving, helpful. And it is to insist that the poor and the lowly shall forever be first men and women, basing themselves on character, and filling the place where they are, not cringing to the great, not envying the great, not cursing, not hating the great.

I have never seen anybody high in office yet, or very rich yet, whose happiness and contentment I felt so sure of that I knew it was perfectly safe to envy him.

Let me take the next step right here, then, and say — it is a continuation of this idea — that the Church of the future is to stand for the only tenable idea of human equality. Learning is not for everybody, knowledge of music is not for everybody, aptness in art is not for everybody, scientific investi-

gation is not for everybody, high social positions or political offices are not for everybody. There is no such thing as equality of ability, of character, of condition, of possession, on the face of the earth; and there never will be.

The Declaration of Independence speaks of men being born free and equal. They are not born free, and they are not born equal. Freedom, if any one ever attains it, is the result of struggle, of growth, not something conferred by birth; and equality, except of rights, is never attained. There is no such thing on the face of the earth; and I question as to whether any such thing is desirable.

Suppose all the people in the world were equally rich, suppose they were all equally great, that they all — if you can imagine such an absurdity — held equally high official positions, that they all occupied similar social stations, that there were no differences, no divergencies, in human society. In the first place, for the sake of having a little change, I would be the first one to volunteer to take a lower position. It would be insufferably monotonous.

And, then, if all the people are writing books, who are to read them? If all the people are painting pictures, who are to admire them? If all are building houses, who are to live in them? If all are to rule, who is to be governed?

You see the idea, the moment you attempt to analyze it, is absurd. There is no such thing as this kind of equality: it is impossible, it is undesirable. The only thing we have a right to demand is that we shall have an equal opportunity to become the highest and best that we may. This, I believe, God will assure to us some when and some where, if not here and now.

But the Church stands, I said, for the only obtainable idea of equality. It stands for the thought that we are

God's children. You have come in here this morning, all divergencies of character, all sorts of differences in social standing and position, all sorts of diversities as to means, as to outward possessions,— different in every sort of way.

But the moment you cross that threshold you are in a house consecrated to the thought of the one God and Father of us all; and here we are brothers, here we are sisters, here we are common children of the one blessed Father in heaven, and all these earthly distinctions fade away. And, if we can let our imagination take flight for a moment, we shall find that just a few years will pass and these things that we pride ourselves on, that are creating these distinctions of high and low and rich and poor here will all be gone, and he that is first up there may be one of those who is the lowliest here, and he who is first here may find himself at the foot of the class over there; for the Church teaches that beneath all these superficial distinctions is the question of likeness to God, the question of love.

Paul teaches — and it is one of the finest teachings in that great book — that, when you have sought all sorts of distinctions and powers and possessions of every kind, you come at last to face the fact that the best gift is one that cannot be the exclusive possession of anybody, that which is open to us all,— love. Love is God, and God is love, and he that loveth is born of God and knoweth God; and he that loveth stands high over there. Not he who is rich, not he who is intellectual, not he who is mighty over his fellows, but he who is likest God.

Again, the Church stands, the ideal Church — it has been already hinted in what I have said — for that which is highest and most distinguished in manhood and womanhood.

There are those who have an idea that to be interested in church affairs is not quite manly. But stop and think a moment,— I can only suggest the idea,— the Church bases itself on that which is peculiarly, characteristically, almost exclusively manly.

We are all animals: we share that with the denizens of the woods and the fields. But come up higher. The lower animals think: we distance them in thought. They share with us that. What is there that we have that makes us exclusively men? What is it that takes us up out of the animal world and sets us at the head, and declares that we are not only sharers in the earthly nature, but in the divine? Before you find that which sets us apart from the lower life around us and crowns us as human, you must come up into the realm that religion concerns itself with,— the spirit, love, the thought of God, and the possibility of our relation with God.

This is that, and this is that alone, which makes us men.

Religion, then,— the Church,— appeals to you as men, and bases itself on that which is peculiarly human.

One other thing the Church stands for,— worship. And here, again, I have met men who thought that worship was undignified, that it was somehow beneath them. They looked upon it as cringing, crawling. They perhaps had in their mind a picture of a man who bends himself in the dust before a king.

But note, friends, that worship, the possibility of worship, is the most divine thing in us all. What does it mean? It means that we are capable of cherishing an ideal; and the fact that we are capable of cherishing an ideal means that we are capable of growth. There could be no advance, no possibility of progress, on the part of creatures that do not

dream. An animal will build his lair the same way year after year: he will make it a little better this year if he discovers a better place or better material or you show him a better place and better material; but no animal ever dreams out a new style of architecture for his home, no animal is ever worried over his social position and wonders as to how he can better himself. No bird ever dreams out a higher moral ideal, condemns itself for its sin, or wonders how it can become a nobler kind of creature. Man is the only one who is restlessly haunted by dreams of something better than he ever saw or knew.

And right in here let me hint at one fact,— that sin, which people tell us is a sign of our degradation, is that which characterizes us as possible children of God. If we had no sense of sin, we should have no sense of imperfection; and that would mean that we had never dreamed of being anything better.

The consciousness of sin is not a sign of degradation, then: it is a sign of uplift, of assent, of possible aspiration towards the highest.

Man, then, is forever haunted by the idea that he ought to be a better man and can be; by the idea that he ought to be surrounded by a better and higher type of civilization, that he ought to build himself a better house, that he ought to create better industrial and social positions. And he always will be haunted by this ideal forever; and that means that he will always advance, that he has in him the possibility of endless evolution and growth. And this means — the point that I spoke of at the outset — that man is a worshipper: he does not worship that which he has attained. Man always worships something that eludes him, that haunts him, that he has not yet attained; and

so he reaches on, reaching for it until as soon as he has grasped it in his hands another dream dawns upon his soul, and so he goes on and on forever.

The Church, then, is to be in the future, as it has been in the past, the mightiest, the most interesting, the most magnificent organization on the face of the earth. All we need is that there should be freedom of thought, and that the open road should never be blockaded or barred, but should stretch on, inviting our feet to advance towards something higher and finer, year after year, and age after age.

What shall be the sacraments, what shall be the rituals, what shall be the method of government, of the Church of to-morrow?

I know not, I care not. We are free to express our beliefs in any terms we choose, only we must not bind ourselves by any. We are free to arrange our music as we will, to organize our rituals and services, and make them grand and imposing as we will. We are free to organize our ecclesiastical governments according to any idea which suits us. These do not touch the essential things for which the Church stands.

I would like only to suggest one thing here that seems to me too often forgotten. Whenever the Church has set up officials over it in the past who have attained high position, ambition has been appealed to; and it has always put itself in the hands of tyrants. I wonder that in this country, where we pride ourselves upon our republicanism and democracy, it does not appeal to us more to have a church in accordance with our governmental idea,—

> "A church without a bishop
> And a State without a king."

This is the old idea that was sung years ago in the beginning of our republic.

It seems to me that we ought to attain a free and flexible organization, that shall not be tied by any power above it that shall interfere with its free growth towards all that is highest and best. Within these limits we can make the external order of the Church what we will.

And then, living with God and for God, organizing ourselves around these spiritual ideas, trying to help each other to live the spiritual life, we shall gain glimpses of that eternal destiny for which the Church has always stood and spoken,— the idea that death is only a name, and that the career on which we have started is endless in its reach, and glowing with increasing glory day by day.

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